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THE WORKS

OF THE

REV. WILLIAM JAY,

OF ARGYLE CHAPEL, BATH.

COMPRISING

MATTER NOT HERETOFORE PRESENTED TO THE AMERICAN PUBLIC.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. III.

CONTAINING

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SERMONS.

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SERMONS.

TO THE CHURCH AND CONGREGATION ASSEMBLING IN ARGYLE CHAPEL, BATH, THE FOLLOWING SERMONS ARE RESPECTFULLY AND AFFECTIONATELY INSCRIBED, BY WILLIAM JAY.

SERMON I.

MISTAKES CONCERNING THE NUMBER OF THE RIGHTEOUS.

Wot ye not what the Scripture saith of Elias? how he maketh intercession to God against Israel; saying, Lord, they have killed thy prophets, and digged down thine altars; and I am left alone, and they seek my life. But what saith the answer of God unto him? I have reserved to myself seven thousand men, who have not bowed the knee to the image of Baal.—Romans xi. 2—4.

"Who can understand his errors?" How numerous, how various, how opposite to each other, are the mistakes of mankind! The lives and the language of many seem to imply a full persuasion, that there is very little evil in sin—that the difficulties of religion are by no means great—that it is an easy thing to be a Christian—that if there be a hell, few are wicked enough to be turned into it—and that the generality of our fellow-creatures are in a fair way for heaven. This persuasion is as false as it is fatal. "Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, which leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, that leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it."

It is possible, however, to fall into another extreme, and to draw an unwarrantable conclusion respecting the decline of religion, and the fewness of its adherents. And even wise men, and good men, are liable to this. "Wot ye not what the Scripture saith of Elias? how he maketh intercession to God against Israel; saying, Lord, they have killed thy prophets, and digged down thine altars; and I am left alone, and they seek my life. But what saith the answer of God unto him? I have reserved to myself seven thousand men, who have not bowed the knee to the image of Baal."

We are going, then, to examine the opinion that reduces the number of the righteous. We shall lay open the various sources from which it proceeds; and by discovering the cause, we shall prescribe the cure.

Sometimes we draw the conclusion from THE PECULIAR STATE OF OUR OWN MINDS. By the indisposition of the body, or the depression of the animal spirits, our minds are soon affected; and we become sad, gloomy, peevish, and suspicious. In this situation our minds are unhinged, and easily receive a falling motion—we are more alive to the influence of fear than hope—the darker the intelligence, the more credible—one direction is given to every occurrence—and the invariable inference is, "all these things are against me." And such seems to have been the condition of Elijah. His language betrays severity, petulancy, and despair.

Sometimes we are led to this reflection, BY OBSERVING MULTIPLIED INSTANCES OF FALSE PROFESSION. These are to be seen in every period of the Church. Our own age abounds with them. Some of these unhappy characters excite our surprise, as well as our sorrow. They promised fair—they did many "wonderful things"—for awhile they bore cheerfully "the reproach of the cross"—they passed us on the road, and reproved the sluggishness of our steps. By-and-by we met them on their return, laughing at that which once made them tremble, and loathing that which was once esteemed by them like life from the dead. Our entreaties were despised—as far as the eye could reach we watched them with tears and alarm—sat down "discouraged because of the way," and "said in our haste, ALL men are liars."—"Take ye heed every one of his neighbour, and trust ye not in ANY brother: for EVERY brother will utterly supplant, and EVERY neighbour will walk with slanders." But it was in our haste we said this—it was a rash conclusion. What! because there is counterfeit coin, is there no genuine gold? Were all the disciples false, because one of them was a devil? "They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that it might be made manifest they were not all of us." But,

alas! the falling star strikes every eye, while few observe the fixed and regular orbs. The apostacy of one pretender often excites more attention than the lives of many solid and steady Christians. They who would never mention the excellencies of professors, will be forward enough to publish their disgrace. It gratifies the malignity of those who only wait for our halting, and occasions a triumph in the enemy's camp—"Aha! so would we have it."

The inference is still more frequently derived from the RIGHTEOUS THEMSELVES. There are five things which will be found to have their influence in producing it—THE OBSCURITY OF THEIR STATIONS—THE DIFFIDENCE OF THEIR DISPOSITIONS—THE MANNER OF THEIR CONVERSION—THE DIVERSITY OF THEIR OPINIONS—and THE IMPERFECTIONS OF THEIR CHARACTER.

I. THE OBSCURITY OF THE STATIONS in which many of the righteous are placed, hides them from observation. When the rich and the honourable become pious, they are not long concealed. A thousand eyes are drawn towards the elevation. The eminence of their condition causes their virtues to shine like the reflection of the sun from the tops of high mountains, seen by many, and from afar.—They are like a city set on a hill, which cannot be hid. But much more religion than is necessary to canonize them, would be even unobserved among the shades of poverty, and in the operations of common life. Here persons have little opportunity or ability to display their character: they are often sanctified and removed, unknown to any but a few neighbours involved in the same indigence. Their excellencies are of the common, sober, unsplendid kind; or if they possess those virtues which distinguish and strike, they are rendered incapable of exercising them by their circumstances. Courage demands danger. Where there is no dignity, there can be no condescension. Where there are no distinctions to elate, humility cannot shine; and where there is nothing to give, benevolence cannot appear. God indeed "looketh to the heart, and where there is first a willing mind, it is accepted according to what a man hath, and not according to what he hath not." In forming his estimate of the services of his people, he considers not only what they do, but what they wish to do. He sees many a benefactor where there is nothing given; many a martyr where there is nothing suffered.—But *we* can only know them by "their fruits:" and their good works, as far as they are observable, are few; their principles, however well established, are checked and limited both in their effect and discovery.—Such are God's hidden ones; hidden by the obscurity of their stations, and the restraint of their circumstances. They are candles, but candles put under bushels.

The poor are too generally overlooked, whereas by Christians they should be principally regarded. The dispensation of the Gospel is peculiarly their privilege; the most extensive provinces of religion are occupied by them; and were we to open a more familiar intercourse with them, it would often rectify our mistakes. All exertions to render the GREAT religious, have hitherto proved ineffectual; and the Bible holds forth a language, sufficient to fill all those who aim at their conversion with despair. Few comparatively are called from the higher orders of society. He who was poor himself, whose kingdom is not of this world, and of whom it was asked, "have any of the rulers believed on him?" generally selects his followers from the lower ranks of life—and there we are to seek them—"I am left alone!"—But perhaps, complaining prophet, you have been only at court—walking through palaces or mansions—examining the high places of the earth. "What dost thou here, Elijah?"—Who led thee here in search of religion?—"Not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble are called."—"How can ye believe who receive honour one of another, and seek not the honour that cometh from God only?"—"How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of heaven! It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God." The voice of heaven calls you away from the "gold ring, and the goodly clothing"—"Hearken, my beloved brethren: hath not God chosen the poor of this world, rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him?"—Follow Him. He will lead you in another direction. Go through yonder village; mingle with the poor and needy. Their necessities have compelled them to seek relief and solace in religion; and they have found them there. Enter that cottage:—"The voice of rejoicing and of salvation is in the tabernacle of the righteous." "Better is a dinner of herbs where love is, than a stalled ox with hatred and strife." "A little that a righteous man hath, is better than the riches of many wicked."—Enter yonder sanctuary—the common people hear him gladly. The congregation withdraws. Observe those who approach and assemble around the table of the Lord.—Ah! well says God, in the language of prophecy, "I will leave in the midst of thee an afflicted and poor people, and they shall trust in the name of the Lord."

II. A TIMID DISPOSITION conceals many. A bold mind will soon obtrude a man into notice: he will signalize himself by his forwardness on every occasion; he will be the first to speak, the first to act. Eager to engage in every public duty, and always talking on religious themes, many will remark him as a lively soul, and be ready to say, "Come, behold his zeal for the Lord of Hosts."

We will not deny that this disposition may sometimes be connected with sincerity; but instances of an opposite nature are much more common, and a mind dealing in professions, and fond of publicity, is generally and deservedly to be suspected. It has been justly observed, that when of old the angels descended to earth, they assumed the form and likeness of men; but when Satan appeared, he transformed himself into an angel of light.—The pretender exceeds the real character: the actor surpasses nature, and goes beyond life. Where a man regards show only, he can afford to be more expensive and magnificent in appearances than those who are concerned for the reality. Empty vessels sound louder than the full. Religion runs along like a river, noiseless in proportion as it is deep.

True piety affects no unnecessary exposure: its voice is not heard in the street; it does not sound a trumpet before it; the left hand knows not what the right hand doeth. It rather eludes public observation, and retires from the applause of the multitude. It does not act to be seen of men, or to "make a fair shew in the flesh." The Christian is more concerned to be good, than to appear so. His religion is commonly attended with diffidence and self-suspicion—he hides his feelings, and makes many anxious inquiries before he can venture to say, "Come unto me, all ye that fear God, and I will tell you what he hath done for my soul." Baxter, speaking of Lord Chief-Justice Hale, tells us, that he had once entertained fears lest he had been too little for the experimental part of religion, such as prayer, and meditation, and spiritual conflict; because he had seldom mentioned such subjects in relation to his own feelings. But he found afterwards that this reluctance arose from his averseness to hypocrisy, of which in his day he had seen so many instances.

It is our duty to make a profession of religion, and unite ourselves with some body of Christians, to walk in the faith and order of the Gospel. But we should do wrong to condemn all those who decline it. Many are held back for a considerable time by painful apprehensions. Jealous over their own hearts, and concerned lest they should be found deceivers at last, they dare not come forward, and venture on so serious an act, as by a public surrender to join themselves to the Church of the living God; and it is to be lamented, that in many cases this timidity is increased by the severe, unscriptural methods of admitting people to the table of the Lord. In the great day, when the secrets of all hearts are made manifest, we shall see many a secret, silent, unobserved follower exalted to the right hand; while many a noisy professor of religion will be thrust down to hell, for want of that truth and sincerity which are essentially necessary to the Christian character and to all acceptable worship.

To this we may add another apprehension. We see it exemplified in Nicodemus—who "came to Jesus by night, for fear of the Jews." Had many seen him at the commencement of his religious course, they would have condemned him; nevertheless he gave at last the clearest proof of his attachment by coming forward, when his own disciples forsook him, and acknowledging a suffering Redeemer. Many may be in similar circumstances: repressed and concealed for a time by the influence of their situations and connexions. We do not praise them for this.—It is their duty unquestionably "to go forth to him without the camp bearing his reproach." We only state a fact which has a bearing on our subject.

III. The MANNER in which some of the people of God are CALLED BY DIVINE GRACE, renders them observable. I hope I need not prove, that in order to the existence of genuine religion in the soul, there is absolutely necessary a change which will embody the various representations given of it in the Scriptures—"Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven"—"Ye must be born again."—"If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature; old things are passed away, and behold all things are become new."—In such awful and decisive terms do the sacred penmen speak of the renovation of our nature as essential to our happiness and our hope.—And this change in all the subjects of divine grace is equally real—but it is not equally perceptible either to themselves or others.—When a man is suddenly stopped in his mad career, and turned from a notorious and profligate course of life—when the drunkard becomes sober, the swearer learns to fear an oath, and the sabbath-breaker goes with the multitude to keep holy day—all must take knowledge of him. The effect is striking; the world wonders; and the Church exclaims, "Who hath begotton me these! these, where had they been!"—But the work is not always so distinguishable. When the subject of it is moral; blessed with a pious education; trained up under the means of grace; the change is much less visible. He avoids the same vices as before; performs the same duties as before; only from other principles and motives, with other views and dispositions—but these fall not under our observation.

Many are prone to look for a conversion, always uniform, not only in its effects but in its operation; and also too much bordering on the miraculous. The soul must be exceedingly terrified with fear—then overwhelmed with anguish—then plunged into despair—then suddenly filled with hope, and peace, and joy; and the person must be able to determine the day on which, the sermon under which, or the providence by which the change was wrought. But this is by no means necessarily, or generally, the case. There is a variety in the

temperaments and habits of men; and in the methods employed to bring them to repentance. And we should remember that there are "differences of administration, but the same Lord"—that often he prefers to the earthquake, the wind, and the fire, the small still voice—that he can draw by the cords of love and the bands of a man—that he can work as effectually by slow, as by instantaneous exertion—and that he can change the soul in a manner so gradual and mild, as to be scarcely discernible to any but the glorious Author.—And here, my brethren, we are furnished with evidence from analogy. In nature, some of God's works insensibly issue in others; and it is impossible for us to draw the line of distinction between them. "The path of the just is as a shining light, which shineth more and more unto the perfect day." But who can ascertain which ray begins, or which ends the dawn?—If you are unable to trace the process of the divine life, judge by the result.—When you perceive the effects of conversion, never question the cause. And if perplexed by a number of circumstantial inquiries, be satisfied if you are able to say, "One thing I know, that whereas I was blind, now I see."

IV. THE DIFFERENCE OF OPINION which prevails among Christians has frequently occasioned a diminution of their number. Indeed the readiest way in the world to thin heaven, and replenish the regions of hell, is to call in the spirit of bigotry. This will immediately arraign, and condemn, and execute all that do not bow down, and worship the image of our idolatry. Possessing exclusive prerogative, it rejects every other claim—"Stand by, I am 'sounder' than thou." "The temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord are we!" How many of the dead has this intolerance sentenced to eternal misery, who will shine for ever as the stars in the kingdom of our Father! How many living characters does it reprobate as enemies to the cross of Christ, who are placing in it all their glory! No wonder if, under the influence of this censorious zeal, we form lessening views of the number of the saved. "I only am left."—Yes; they are few indeed, if none belong to them that do not belong to your party—that do not see with your eyes—that do not believe election with you, or universal redemption with you—that do not worship under a steeple with you, or in a meeting with you—that are not dipped with you, or sprinkled with you.—But hereafter we shall find that the righteous were not so circumscribed, when we shall see "many coming from the east, and from the west, from the north, and from the south, to sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven."

Do I plead for an excessive candour?—The candour which regards all sentiments alike, and considers no errors as destructive, is no virtue. It is the offspring of ignorance, of insensibility, and of cold indifference. The blind do not perceive the difference of colours. The dead never dispute. Ice, as it congeals, aggregates all bodies within its reach, however heterogeneous their quality. Every virtue has certain bounds, and when it exceeds them it becomes a vice; for the last step of a virtue, and the first step of a vice, are contiguous.

—But surely it is no wildness of candour, that leads us to give the liberty we take; that suffers a man to think for himself, unawed; and that concludes he may be a follower of God, though "he follow not with us." Why should we hesitate to consider a man a Christian, when we see him abhorring and forsaking sin; hungering and thirsting after righteousness; diligent in approaching unto God; walking "in newness of life," and discovering a spirituality of temper, a disposition for devotion, a deadness to the world, a benevolence, a liberality, such as we seldom find in those high-toned doctrinalists who regard themselves as the only advocates for free grace?—And by the way, it is not a system of notions, however good, or a judgment in divine things however clear, that will constitute a Christian.—It is a transformation by the renewing of the mind. It is a "putting off the old man with his deeds, and putting on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness." It is "walking even as he walked." "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his."

And to pass to the opposite side: we should also remember, that men do not always live according to the natural tendency and consequences of their creed. Some hold sentiments very injurious to holiness who are not wicked men: their hearts are better than their opinions; their principles give their consciences a liberty to sin which they refuse to take; and their practice is adorned with good works, which their system by no means requires. No one can imagine that I mention this with a view to countenance or palliate the adoption of such sentiments. They blaspheme every line in the Bible; and are always injurious in a degree: but where they happen to fall in with a love of sin, the effect is dreadful. Where such a poisonous infusion is imbibed, and not counteracted by a singular potency of constitution, the consequence is certain death.

V. Many are excluded from the number of the righteous by PRACTICAL IMPERFECTIONS. There is a blemish in every duty; a deficiency in every grace; a mixture in every character: and if none are to be considered as the people of God, who are not free from infirmity, you will easily be induced to take up the language—"I am left alone."—For who can say, "I have made my heart clean, I am pure from my sin:" "I have attained, I am already perfect?" The best of men are but

men at the best.—"I am left alone!"—Nay, Elijah, in this sense even you are not left. Even you are "a man of like passions as we are." With all your miraculous endowments and religious attainments, you discovered the same natural feelings, the same moral defects. You feared Jezebel—fled dismayed from your work—impatiently demanded to die—and drew a very erroneous and unworthy conclusion respecting the true worshippers of God. Yea, there NEVER was one left: for to which of the saints will you turn? To Abraham?—he denies his wife in Egypt and in Gerar. To Moses?—he spake "unadvisedly with his lips." To Job?—he curses the day of his birth. To Peter?—he abjures his Lord.—I know I tread on dangerous ground. The Antinomian drunkard may call in Noah as his example; and the unclean, who turn the grace of God into lasciviousness, may plead the adultery of David. They may hope where they should fear; take for encouragement what was only given for caution; and resemble those in their fall, whose repentance they will never imitate.—And "thinkest thou, O man, who doest such things, to escape the judgment of God?"—Instead of raising thee up like these restored penitents as a monument of mercy to future generations, he will harden thee into a pillar of salt.

God forbid we should plead for sin; but let us not shun to declare a truth for fear of a possible abuse of it. Severe in judging ourselves, let us endeavour to judge favourably of others, and place before our minds every consideration tending to aid that charity which "thinketh no evil, believing all things, hoping all things, enduring all things."—That we are to learn of One, who will not break a bruised reed, or quench the smoking flax, till he bring forth judgment unto victory.—That there is a day of small things, which we are not to despise.—That grace corrects, but does not eradicate nature; subdues, but does not extinguish the passions; forms us Christians, but leaves us men.—That there are inequalities among the righteous; that the good ground yielded in varied proportions, some a hundred fold, some sixty, some thirty.—That a prevailing holy disposition may fail in a particular instance, and that a single action is not to be pleaded against a long-continued practice.—That persons who would abandon an unlawful pursuit, the moment they are convinced of its impropriety, may continue in it for a time, for want of knowledge or reflection.—That as we entertain a confidence in our own salvation, though conscious of numberless imperfections, we should not require perfection in others.—That our failures, though not as gross, may be as guilty as those of our brethren—and, that we may sometimes entertain a hope which we are afraid to publish; and believe that some are in the way to heaven, whose safe arrival there, we trust, will never be known in this world.

My brethren, in our application of this subject, let us FIRST remark the use the Apostle makes of it. "Even so then, at this present time also, there is a remnant according to the election of grace."—God never leaves himself without witness. He has always instruments to carry on his cause, and a people to shew forth his praise. These are the pillars of a state to keep it from falling—the salt of the earth to preserve it from corruption—the light of the world to secure it from darkness: and as Esaias said before, "Except the Lord of Sabaoth had left us a seed, we had been as Sodom, and been made like unto Gomorrah."—Relinquish diminishing ideas of the Divine goodness; "his mercies are over all his works."—Look back to Calvary, and see Jesus bearing the sins of MANY; see him rising from the dead to receive "the heathen for his inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for his possession." "The pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand." "He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be SATISFIED."—Look forward, and behold "a great multitude which no man can number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues."—Behold even now "the Captain of your salvation" "bringing MANY sons unto glory,"—and no longer imagine that there is any danger of your being "left alone." Rejoice, ye friends and followers of the lamb; you belong to no small family—you do not approach the throne of grace alone—you are not alone in your hopes and in your pleasures—you are not alone in your struggles, groans, and tears.—Far more than you have apprehended are on "The Lord's side," attached to the same Saviour, travelling the same road, heirs of the same "grace of life."

SECONDLY. Are you of the number? It is of little importance for you to know that many will enter in, if you are excluded. "There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when ye shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets, in the kingdom of God, and you yourselves thrust out." As you all hope to escape this dreadful doom, it behoves you to examine whether your confidence be well founded, and whether, living as you live, the Scripture justifies your hope of heaven when you die.—Who then, you ask, will be saved? Those who live in the world, and are not like it. Those who "have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them." Those who are "a PECULIAR people, zealous of good works." It is the character here given them: "I have reserved to myself seven thousand men, who have not BOWED THE KNEE TO THE IMAGE OF BAAL." And this was the reigning sin. The court, the city, the country, all followed Baal; his worship was universal. My brethren, the

best evidence you can give of your integrity, is freedom from the prevailing, fashionable vices and follies of the times and places in which you live. A dead fish can swim with the stream, but a live one only can swim against it.

The influence of one man over another is truly wonderful. The individual is upright; his connexions give him all his wrong bias. Alone, he forms good resolutions; when he enters the world they are broken. It is not ignorance, but a cowardly shame that keeps many in a state of indecision, "halting between two opinions." They know what is right, and would gladly partake of the believer's safety; but they have not fortitude enough to encounter the reproach, which, in one form or another, always attends an adherence to the cause of Christ. Others, who had made some pleasing progress, have been easily deprived by a name, a laugh, a sneer, of all their religion.—Not to "bow the knee to Baal," when all adore him—to step forth with our family behind us, and say to our neighbours and our relations, "Choose you this day whom ye will serve, but as for me and my house we will serve the Lord"—to withstand in a pious cause the influence of example—to keep our way when we see an adverse multitude approaching us—to pass through the midst, unshrinking while we feel the scourge of the tongue—this is no easy thing. This is principle in triumph. And this Christian heroism is not only commendable, but necessary. Do not say therefore, if we do this, we shall be singular. If you are Christians, you MUST be singular: it is the grand design, the unavoidable consequence of the Gospel. Read the character of its followers: "Ye are not of the world, even as I am not of the world."—Examine its commands: "Be not conformed to this world, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind."—Weigh the condition of its dignities and privileges: "Come out from among them, and be ye separate, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty."—My dear hearers, the language is too plain to be misunderstood; the meaning is too awful to be trifled with. Decide; and decide immediately. "Withdraw yourselves from these men" before a common perdition involves you all. If with them you will sin, with them you must suffer. They who followed the multitude rather than Noah, were drowned in the Flood. They who followed the multitude rather than Lot, were destroyed in the cities of the plain. They who followed the multitude rather than Joshua and Caleb, perished in the wilderness! And as it was then, so it is now—"As for such as turn aside to their crooked ways, the Lord will lead them forth WITH the workers of iniquity."

THIRDLY. Let those who have been "reserved," consider the Author and the End of their distinction.

—Remember BY whom you have been secured. God is the Author—hence he says, "I HAVE reserved." "For who maketh thee to differ from another? and what hast thou that thou didst not receive?" Had you been left to yourselves, and "given up to your own counsel," you would have been carried along by the same depraved tendency, "according to the course of this world." But his grace, equally free and powerful, interposed in your favour; it gave to ordinances their efficacy, and to the dispensations of Providence their sanctifying influence, in turning the mind and restraining the life from sin: and, boasting excluded, you are indulging yourselves in language used by all the redeemed before you —"Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto thy Name be glory, for thy mercy and for thy truth's sake." "By the grace of God I am what I am: not I, but the grace of God which was with me."

—Remember also FOR whom you have been secured. God is the end—hence he says, "I have reserved UNTO MYSELF.—They are to be representatives on earth, to wear my image, to maintain my cause, to be employed in my service. This people have I formed for myself, they shall shew forth my praise.—They shall be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that he may be glorified. The Lord hath set apart him that is godly FOR HIMSELF."—Christians—it is a high, an awful destiny. It sheds a sacredness over the whole character, which you should always feel. It hallows you. It consecrates your persons, and your possessions. All you have, all you are, is his—all is FOR him. This end determines, and simplifies your work. To this you are to make every thing subordinate, and subservient. "Whether, therefore, ye eat or drink, or whatever ye do, do all to the glory of God. FOR NONE OF US LIVETH TO HIMSELF, AND NO MAN DIETH TO HIMSELF: FOR WHETHER WE LIVE, WE LIVE UNTO THE LORD, OR WHETHER WE DIE, WE DIE UNTO THE LORD: WHETHER THEREFORE WE LIVE OR DIE, WE ARE THE LORD'S."

SERMON II.

THE NATURE OF GENUINE RELIGION.

I will give them one heart, and I will put a new spirit within you; and I will take the stony heart out of their flesh, and will give them an heart of flesh: that they may walk in my statutes, and keep mine ordinances, and do them: and they shall be my people, and I will be their God.—Ezekiel xi. 19, 20.

"THE works of the Lord are great, sought out of all them that have pleasure therein."

It is pleasing to observe Him as the God of nature, "renewing the face of the earth;" "crowning the year with his goodness;" "opening his hand, and satisfying the desire of every living thing." It is edifying to trace Him as the God of Providence, "fixing the bounds of our habitation;" assigning every man his station; qualifying individuals for the sphere in which they move; and sometimes "raising up the poor out of the dust, and lifting the needy out of the dunghill, that He may set him with princes, even with the princes of his people."—But it is much more pleasing and edifying to contemplate Him AS THE GOD OF ALL GRACE. Here "He excelleth in glory." Here "He spares not his own Son, but delivers him up for us all." Here "He saves us by the washing of regeneration, and the renewing of the Holy Ghost, which he sheds on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour." Here we behold Him, from the ruins of the Fall, making the sinner "an eternal excellency, the joy of many generations."

All this "purpose and grace" He has given us in a way of promise. And of all the promises with which the Scripture abounds, no one is more important than the words which we have read—"I will give them one heart, and I will put a new spirit within you; and I will take the stony heart out of their flesh, and will give them an heart of flesh: that they may walk in my statutes, and keep mine ordinances, and do them: and they shall be my people, and I will be their God."

Behold a full representation of a subject which deserves all your regard! See genuine religion developed in four essential articles.—I. Its Author. II. The disposition it produces. III. The obedience it demands. IV. The blessedness it ensures.

I. Observe, my brethren, how expressly God appropriates this work to HIMSELF. "I WILL GIVE them one heart, and I WILL PUT a new spirit within you"—and so of all the rest. Real religion is of a DIVINE original: it never would have had an existence in the world without the revelation of God; and it will never have an existence in the soul without the operation of God.—There is indeed some difficulty attending the discussion of this subject. The more spiritual any work of God is, the more remote will it necessarily be found from human comprehension. Our Saviour compares this influence to the agency of the wind; which, of all the phenomena of nature, is the least apprehensible in its essence, and the most sensible in its effects. "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit." The doctrine has also been much abused. It has often been so managed, as to make the sinner, while in his natural state, to appear unfortunate rather than criminal; and to render the use of means and exertions needless.—The sacred writers do not inform us where precisely diligence and dependence unite, or how they blend through the whole course of the Christian life; but they assure us of the reality and the constancy of their union: they inform us that there is no inconsistency between the command and the promise; that it is our duty, as well as privilege, to "be filled with the Spirit;" and that we are to "work out our own salvation with fear and trembling; FOR it is God that worketh in us to will and to do of his own good pleasure."

This being premised, we proceed to establish the doctrine we have advanced. And the proof is by no means difficult. It is as simple and obvious, as it is convincing. For if "all things are of God," is religion to be excluded? and to form the only exception? Does "the river of the water of life" spring from a source on this side "the throne of God and of the Lamb?" If in HIM we live, and move, "and have our" natural "being;" do we derive from an inferior principle our spiritual life?—a life sublimely called "the life of God?" If the discoveries which furnish us with the accommodations and conveniences of human life—if the skill of the husbandman, and the wisdom of the mechanic—be in Scripture ascribed to His influence; who gives us the genius to live divinely, and to have "our conversation in heaven?"

The expressions, "to be born again;" to be made "a new creature;" to be "raised from the dead," applied to the subjects of divine grace, are allowed to be metaphorical; but they are designed to convey a truth; and to teach us, not only the greatness of the change, but also the Author of it. If religion were a human production, it would wear the resemblance of man; it would not be the reverse of all he now is. After what the Scripture has said respecting the total depravity of human nature, and which, by experience and observation, we observe every day to be true in fact; nothing can be more wonderful than to find any of the children of men possessing true holiness. The question then is, how it came there? It could not spring from themselves; for "who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean?" No effect can exceed its cause; and an inadequate cause is no cause. Whence then does it proceed?—"To the law and to the testimony." The Scripture assures us it is the work of God; and leads us to trace back the grand whole, and the separate parts; the perfection, the progress, the commencement—of religion in the soul, to a divine agency.—"Who are born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." "He that hath wrought us for the self-same thing is God, who hath also given unto us the earnest of the Spirit." "By grace are ye saved, through

faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast: for we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them."

Nor is this a curious, or a useless speculation. The importance of it equals the evidence. To know things in their causes, has been deemed the highest kind of knowledge: to know salvation in its source, is indispensable. First, it is necessary, to guide and to encourage the concern of awakened sinners, who are asking, "Men and brethren, what shall we do!" Such persons will not cheerfully and courageously enter on a course of godliness, without an assurance of effectual aid. Seeing so many difficulties and dangers before them, and feeling their corruption and weakness, after a few unsuccessful struggles, they will sink down in hopeless despair; unless, under a sense of their own inability, we can exhibit that grace which is sufficient for them, and meet them with the promise; "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you. For if ye, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give his holy Spirit to them that ask him!" This decides: this animates. "The grace of the promise is adequate to the duty of the command. Does the work to which I am called, look fitter for an angel, than for a man? I have more than an angel's resources; my sufficiency is of God. Without Him I can do nothing; but through his strengthening of me I can do all things."—Secondly, the same discovery is necessary, to call forth the acknowledgments, and to regulate the praises, of those who are sanctified by divine grace. The original cause determines the final end. If their recovery commence from themselves, it may terminate in themselves; and being the authors of the cure, they may lawfully appropriate the glory arising from it. But the Gospel assures us, that God has completely excluded boasting: that He has arranged the whole economy of our salvation, with the express view "that no flesh should glory in his presence." And an experience of divine truth delivers a man from that ignorance and pride, which once led him to think of being his own saviour: he feels, that "by the grace of God, he is what he is:" and thus he is reduced again to the proper condition of a creature—lives a life of dependence and of praise —and acknowledges his obligations to "HIM, OF whom, and THROUGH whom, and TO whom are ALL things." We have seen the origin of religion. Behold,

II. The DISPOSITION which it produces.—It is characterized three ways. "I will give them ONE heart, and I will put a NEW spirit within you; and I will take the STONY heart out of their flesh, and will give them an heart of FLESH."

First, He promises to give them ONE heart: and this shews the SAMENESS of religion, as to the leading views, sentiments, and pursuits of its possessors. Of the converts at Jerusalem, it is said "The multitude of them that believed were of ONE heart and of ONE soul." Feeling the same wants, and attracted to the same Source of relief, they assembled and blended together: they had many hearts before: they "followed divers lusts and pleasures;" they "turned every man to his own way." From these various wanderings, they are called to enter, and to travel the same way—Grace produced a unity; and a unity it always will produce. But a unity of what!—Of opinions? Of forms and ceremonies? Of dress and phraseology? No: but of something infinitely superior—a oneness of reliance—of inclination—of taste—of hopes and fears—of joys and sorrows. Though divided and distinguished from each other by a thousand peculiarities, they ALL hate sin; they ALL "hunger and thirst after righteousness;" they "ALL follow hard after God;" they ALL feel the spiritual life to be a warfare; they ALL "confess themselves to be strangers and pilgrims upon earth."—Thus with circumstantial diversity we have essential identity; the substance as unalterable, as the modes are various; the dress changing with times and places; the figure, the members, the soul, always the same. "By one Spirit, we are all baptized into one body; whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into ONE Spirit."—He engages also to produce,

Secondly, a NEW spirit. "And I will put a NEW spirit within you." Not only a spirit different from that which still animates others, but distinguished from that which once influenced them. For it was not born with them: they were once strangers to it—but designed for a new world, new work, new pleasures, it was necessary for them to have a new spirit. Elevation will only serve to embarrass and encumber a man, unless he be suited to it. A king may advance a slave to a station of eminence: but, with a change of condition, he cannot give him a change of disposition; with his new office, he cannot bestow a new spirit. But, in this manner, the Lord qualifies his people for their situation and engagements; and thus they are at home in them; there is a suitableness productive of ease and enjoyment.

This is the peculiar glory of the Gospel. Observe all false religions. They take man as he is; they accommodate themselves to his errors and his passions; they leave him essentially the same. THEY follow the man; they are formed after HIS likeness. Whereas here the MAN is changed; he is modeled after the image of his religion. The Gospel, instead of

flattering, tells him that nothing is to be done while he remains as he now is—that, in his present state, he is incapable of performing its duties and of relishing its joys—that he MUST be transformed, or he "cannot enter into the kingdom of God." And what it indispensably requires, it provides for, and secures: hence all is order and harmony. For, every thing in the sublime dispensation of the Gospel, and the constitution of the Christian Church, is NEW. We have "a NEW covenant." We have a "NEW Jerusalem, which is the mother of us all." "We approach God by a NEW and living way." We sing "a NEW song." We are called by "a NEW name." According to his promise, we look for "NEW heavens and a NEW earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness." "He that sitteth upon the throne saith, Behold, I create ALL things NEW." Do you wonder, therefore, my brethren, that we are required to "put off the old man with his deeds; and to put on the NEW man:" to "walk in NEWNESS of life:" to serve him in "NEWNESS of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter?"—that we are assured that "neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a NEW creature?"—that "if any man be in Christ, he is a NEW creature"—that "old things are passed away, and, behold, ALL things are become NEW?"

Thirdly, He gives "them an heart of FLESH." It was a heart of "stone" before. Take a stone—feel it—how cold! Strike it—it resists the blow. Lay upon it a burden—it feels no pressure. Apply to it a seal—it receives no impression. Such were your hearts once; thus cold, impenetrable, senseless, unyielding, and unsusceptible. What a mercy is it to have this curse removed, and to have "hearts of flesh!"—to be able to feel; to feel spiritually; to be alive to "the powers of the world to come!" to be no longer insensible to divine and heavenly things, when they come in contact with us!

And remember, Christians, this holy sensibility is evidenced not only by your pleasing emotions, but also by your distressing ones. Your tears of sorrow indicate spiritual sensation, as well as your tears of joy. Is not pain a proof of feeling?

—Yes; the Christian's heart is a "heart of flesh."

—Bring it to the word of God—it feels. "My heart," says David, "standeth in awe of thy word." "He trembles at His word," says Isaiah. He opens it with reverence; he bows to its authority; he often compares himself with its demands; he reads the character and doom of apostates, and turns pale; he dreads its threatenings; he longs for an interest in its promises! O how many feelings will one chapter set in motion!

Bring it to sin—it feels. A tender conscience, like the eye, is offended with a mote. A dead corpse is unaffected with the deepest wound; but the point of a needle makes the living body to writhe. While others do not groan, though charged with heinous crimes, the Christian complains even of infirmities, of wandering thoughts, of earthly affections. A look from his offended Lord will make him "go out and weep bitterly."

Bring it to the dispensations of Providence—it feels. "My flesh trembleth for fear of thee, and I am afraid of thy righteous judgments." Or does he prosper? He is no stranger to a fear lest "his table should become a snare, and a trap, and a stumbling-block, and a recompense unto him."

Bring it to the divine glory—it feels. "Rivers of waters run down mine eyes, because men keep not thy law."

Bring it to the concerns of others—it feels. "He weeps with them that weep. He considers them that are in adversity, as bound with them." "Who is weak, and he is not weak? who is offended, and he burns not?"—For a tender heart is always accompanied with a tender hand, and a tender tongue. Such is the disposition which is formed in all the subjects of divine grace: and why is it produced? To enable us to observe the whole revealed will of God, in a course of cheerful and active obedience. This,

III. Brings us to observe the PRACTICE which religion demands—"That they may WALK in my STATUTES, and KEEP mine ORDINANCES, and DO them." It is strange, that a system of religion should be ever advanced, which, if it comprehends obedience and good works at all, places them in a very inferior situation; seems always afraid to bring them forward; dares not hold them forth as the end and perfection of the whole, to which every thing else leads, and in which every thing else is to terminate—nor insist on their being so essentially necessary, that without them all our pretensions to godliness are vain. Yet in this decisive manner does HE speak of them, "who came to bear witness to the truth." "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that DOETH the will of my Father who is in heaven." "If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye DO them." "He that hath my commandments, and KEEPETH them, HE it is that LOVETH me."

But is it not equally absurd to expect this practice where there is nothing to secure it? or to suppose that a man's life will be in perpetual contradiction to all his bias and inclinations? "Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so, every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree CANNOT bring forth evil fruit; neither CAN a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit."—In order, therefore, to do justice to this part of our subject, I would state two remarks, which we hope you

will always remember and unite. First, principle must precede practice. Secondly, practice must follow principle.

First. Observe the order in which these things are arranged—"I will give them one heart, and I will put a new spirit within you; and I will take the stony heart out of their flesh, and will give them an heart of flesh: THAT they may walk in my statutes, and keep mine ordinances, and do them." Thus principle precedes practice, and prepares for it. And here we admire the plan of the Gospel. To make the fruit good, it makes the tree so: to cleanse the stream, it purifies the fountain. It renews the nature, and the life becomes holy of course. What is the religion of too many?—they are like machines, impelled by force: they are influenced only by external considerations. Their hearts are not engaged. Hence, in every religious exercise they perform a task. They would love God much better, if he would excuse them altogether from the hateful obligation. They put off these duties as long as possible; resort to them with reluctance; adjust the measure with a niggardly grudge; and are glad of any excuse for neglect. While labouring at the drudgery, they entertain hard thoughts of the cruel Taskmaster, who can impose such severities upon them, and sigh inwardly, "When will the Sabbath be over?" when shall we unbend from these spiritual restraints, and feel ourselves at liberty in the world?—Can this be religion? Is there any thing in this, suitable to the nature of God, who is "a Spirit?" or to the demands of God, who cries, "My son, give me thine heart;" "serve the Lord with gladness, and come before his presence with singing?"—Behold a man hungry—he needs no argument to induce him to eat. See that mother—she needs no motive to determine her to cherish her darling babe—nature impels. The obedience of the Christian is, in consequence of regeneration, natural; and hence it is pleasant and invariable: "he runs and is not weary, he walks and is not faint."

Secondly. It is equally true that practice must follow principle. The one is the necessary CONSEQUENCE of the other. This influence will operate: if it be fire, it will burn; if it be leaven, it will pervade and assimilate; if it be in us "a well of water," it will "spring up into everlasting life."—The one is the proper EVIDENCE of the other. The cause is ascertained by the effect. It is not necessary to lay open the body of a tree, to determine, by the grain, to what class it belongs: there is an easier and a surer mode of judging: "the tree is known by its fruits." Some, while leading very indifferent lives, tell us their hearts are good: but goodness in the heart will appear in the life; a good conscience will always be accompanied with a good conversation. Faith justifies the soul; but works justify faith. "Shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works." The one is the chief RECOMMENDATION of the other. It is by practice only you can shew the value of principle. Your views and feelings are beyond the reach of others; your experience is invisible: but it is otherwise with your actions; these come under their observation; and they can form an estimate of your religion by the excellency of its influence. And when your lives correspond with your profession; when you are "followers of God as dear children;" when you are humble in prosperity; cheerful in adversity; ready to forgive; willing to bear one another's burdens; attentive to the duties of your stations; and unblameable in every relation—you are perpetually magnifying your religion: you "adorn the doctrine of God your Saviour;" you "put to silence the ignorance of foolish men;" you sometimes allure them, according to the instructive admonition of our Saviour, "Let your light so shine before men, that they may SEE YOUR GOOD WORKS, AND GLORIFY YOUR FATHER WHICH IS IN HEAVEN."—And with what is all this connected? "They shall be my people, and I will be their God." This shews us,

IV. The blessed PRIVILEGE of the righteous. For here we are to contemplate their honour and their happiness.—Every thing depends upon this relation. "Blessed are the people that are in such a case; yea, happy is that people whose God is the Lord."

When "God gave promise to Abraham, because he could swear by no greater, He sware by himself:" when He would bless his people, because He could give them no greater, He gave Himself. They are all a nation of Levites; for "the Lord is their inheritance:" and it is "a goodly" one; it "gives grace and glory, and no good thing does" it "withhold from them that walk uprightly." "It is profitable unto all things; having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come."

—Consider the meaning of the language. It is more than if He said, I will be thy friend, thy helper, thy benefactor; for these are relations derived from creatures, and therefore notions of limited significancy.—But when He says, "I will be thy God, he takes an image from Himself, and engages to do us good according to the all-sufficiency of an infinite nature; to bestow upon us blessings which are peculiar to Deity—to do for us what Deity alone can do, and to do it DIVINELY—to pardon, and to pardon like a God—to sanctify, and to sanctify like a God—to comfort, and to comfort like a God—to glorify, and to glorify like a God;—God appearing all along, in the manner, as well as in the mercy.

Consider also the nature of the claim. He is really yours. In nothing else have you such a propriety. Your time is not your own; your riches are not your own; your children

are not your own; your bodies, and your spirits, are not your own—but God is yours by absolute promise, and donation; and you may join with the Church of old, and say, "God, "even our own God, shall bless us." And He is wholly yours—all He is, all He possesses—the perfections of his nature, the dispensations of his providence, the blessings of his salvation, the treasures of his word—all are become your own: and what Benhadad said to the king of Israel, and what the father of the prodigal said to the elder brother, God says to each of you—"I am thine, and all that I have:" "Son, thou art ever with me, and all that I have is thine." And He is yours for ever; the union is indissoluble; his duration is the tenure of your bliss; as long as He lives he will be your God.

Once more: Consider the final issue of the connexion. The relation is intended to display the immensity of his benevolence, and of his munificence, towards his people. It does much for them here; and when they reflect upon their original meanness and continued unworthiness, and consider what they have received, they are filled with wonder, and exclaim, "What manner of love is this!" "what shall I render to the Lord for all his benefits towards me!"—But they "shall see greater things than these." They have now only "the first-fruits of the Spirit;" "the earnest of their inheritance." Their alliance with God is often concealed from others, and from themselves; and the advantages it produces are circumscribed by the world in which we live, and the body of this death. It has not room in which to operate, or time in which to expand. We are therefore led to look forward; and what the apostle says with regard to the patriarchs, will apply to all his people—"wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he hath prepared for them a city." What an intimation of his infinite goodness is here! He would be ashamed of the relation into which He has entered, if he conferred no more upon his followers than the benefits they derive from him on earth.—Behold then an eternity succeeding time: a new system prepared to receive them: a happiness in reserve, of which they can now form no adequate conception!—When He has exchanged their dungeon for a palace; when he has "wiped away all tears from their eyes;" when He has eased every pain, fulfilled every desire, realized every hope; when he has changed "this vile body," and fashioned it like the "glorious body" of the Saviour; when He has entirely expelled sin from their nature, and presented them, "faultless, before the presence of his glory, with exceeding joy"—then the character will be fully displayed, and the relation completely justified; and all hell and heaven will acknowledge that "He has been their God."

I divide this assembly into three classes. And, first, I address those who are careless of this blessed relation.—Such were many of the Jews of old. "Israel," says God, "would have none of me." And you are of the same number. You say, by your actions, if not by your words, "depart from us, for we desire not the knowledge of thy ways." You are asking, "who will shew us any good!" but you do not, and you know you do not, pray, "Lord, lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon me."—But is it a vain thing to seek God, or to serve Him? Allowing other things to be valuable, are they to be compared with God, who is the portion of his people? But they are not valuable; they cannot give satisfaction; they leave a void unfilled; they cannot ease the anguish of a troubled conscience, sustain the soul in trouble, or subdue the fear of death: they fail in those seasons and circumstances in which you must need their aid. And, for these, will you hazard the loss of the supreme good? Will you "follow lying vanities, and forsake your own mercies?"—"Have the workers of iniquity no knowledge?" Now you know not the magnitude of your loss: you are not aware of the full meaning of the word "depart"—go from the God of life, go from the Source of all consolation, go from all mercy and grace, for ever. Now, you are not abandoned to reflection: you are busied, and entertained; and though not satisfied, you are diverted.—But,

> "——O ye gay dreamers of gay dreams,
> How will you weather an eternal night,
> Where such expedients fail?"

A loss is to be measured by the worth of the thing we lose—and you lose God! Other losses may be corrective, but this is destructive; other losses may befal friends, but this only befals enemies; other losses may be retrieved, this is irreparable.—Is He willing to become mine? He is; He condescends to expostulate, to invite, to press: "Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread, and your labour for that which satisfieth not? Hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness. Incline your ear, and come unto me; hear, and your soul shall live; and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David."—"Seek ye the Lord while he may be found; call upon him while he is near."

Secondly, I would address those who are of a doubtful mind. For while some claim the relation, to whom it does not belong, some, to whom it belongs, are afraid to claim it. Now this is to be lamented; for if God be yours, and you know it not, you sustain a vast loss of consolation. Besides; it is possible for you to obtain "a good hope through grace:" the promise implies a possibility of decision. "They shall call upon my Name, and I will hear them: I will SAY, It is my people; and they shall SAY the Lord is MY

God." And why cannot you say this? Have you dissolved connexion with the world, and taken "hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew, saying, I will go with you, for I have heard that GOD is with you?" Can you easily make the language of his praying followers your own? and is this the essence of every desire you feel—"Remember me, O Lord, with the favour thou bearest to thy people. O visit me with thy salvation; that I may see the good of thy chosen, that I may rejoice in the goodness of thy nation, that I may glory with thine inheritance!" When your minds rove through the universe, finding no substitute for Him, do you come back and ask, "Where is God my Maker, who giveth songs in the night?" After comparing communion with Him to every other conceivable good, can you say, "Whom have I in heaven but Thee, and there is none upon earth that I desire besides Thee?"—When the ambassadors of a certain nation came to the Romans, offering to be their allies, and were refused; they said, if we cannot be your allies, we will be your subjects; we will not be your enemies. Can you say, Lord, I will be thine; I will not be mine own: if I am not received as a friend, I will be employed as a servant: I never can be thy foe?—And YOU are wishing to be able to "SAY, He is my God." Why you have SAID it. Having thus chosen Him, be assured He has chosen you. Having thus given yourselves to Him, be assured he has given himself to you. If you are his, He is yours.—

Thirdly, are there none in the Divine presence who are enabled to say, as the language both of devotion and of confidence, "My Lord, and my God?"—Follow the example of the Church; publish the fame of his goodness, and animate others to join you in praising Him. "Behold, God is my salvation; I will trust and not be afraid: for the Lord Jehovah is my strength and my song; he also is become my salvation." Plead your interest in Him, in all your dangers, troubles, and necessities. Envy none their wordly distinctions. Remember your pre-eminence: "you are the sons and daughters of the Lord Almighty." Do not complain because they may possess things, of which you are deprived. You have a God; they are destitute: you can sustain a loss uninjured; they would be undone. If your taper be extinguished, you have a sun: but when "the candle of the wicked is put out," they are involved in darkness—"darkness that may be felt." Honour your God by living upon his fulness, and endeavouring by faith to realize in Him, every thing you seek for, in vain, in yourselves, or in creatures. Observe the address of Moses to the Israelites—"What nation is there so GREAT, who hath God so nigh unto them, as the Lord our God is in all things that we call upon him for!" They were an inconsiderable body, confined in a wilderness: the commerce, arts and sciences, were all with their enemies. They had the same raiment they wore out of Egypt forty years before; and had no provisions beforehand for a single day. But their peculiar GREATNESS arose from their nearness to God: in having Him, they had all. He possessed, and could immediately produce the supplies their necessities required: they had only to ask and have.—When David was plundered, and stripped of all he had in Ziklag; it is said, he "encouraged himself in the Lord his God"—HE was left. Thus, a Christian who has nothing, possesses all things.—Creatures may abandon him; but his God will never leave nor forsake him. Friends may die; but the Lord liveth. His "heart and his flesh may fail; but God is the strength of his heart, and his portion for ever." "The heavens may pass away with a great noise, and the elements melt with fervent heat; the earth and the works that are therein may be burned up"—he stands upon the ashes of a universe, and exclaims, I have lost nothing! Yea, he has gained "new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness!"

SERMON III.

VOWS CALLED TO REMEMBRANCE.

And God said unto Jacob, Arise, go up to Bethel, and dwell there; and make there an altar unto God, that appeared unto thee when thou fleddest from the face of Esau, thy brother. Then Jacob said unto his household, and to all that were with him, Put away the strange gods that are among you, and be clean, and change your garments: and let us arise, and go up to Bethel; and I will make there an altar unto God, who answered me in the day of my distress, and was with me in the way which I went.—Genesis xxxv. 1—3.

THE pieces of history preserved in the book of Genesis are peculiarly valuable and worthy of our regard. They possess the claim of truth, of impartiality, of remote antiquity, of individual and minute description. They are family scenes, which always charm. We feel ourselves in private life. We pursue single characters through all the vicissitudes of their pilgrimage, and observe the various workings of their minds; their imperfections and their excellences; the flesh lusting against the Spirit, and the Spirit gaining a victory over the flesh. They are also recommended, as holding forth the dispensations of Divine Providence and Grace combined. It is painful to see a man raised up to be a Divine instrument only: girded and guided by a hand which he knows not; accomplishing designs which he never desired or approved; and then laid aside or dashed to pieces, as a vessel in which

there is no pleasure: and such are often the philosophers, the politicians, and the heroes of this world. But how delightful and edifying is it to contemplate men, who were not only instruments, but favourites; who did "the will of God from the heart," and "had the testimony that they pleased Him;" who were the depositaries of the Divine counsel, and increased the treasures of Revelation; "of whom, as concerning the flesh, Christ came;" and with whom we hope to reside for ever: "for many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven." The command of God also leads us back to the patriarchal age, sends us forth in search of these renowned worthies, and enjoins us "not to be slothful, but followers of them, who through faith and patience inherit the promises."

These reflections, my brethren, are intended to raise this book in your esteem, and to engage your attention to the words which I have detached from it for your present edification. And God said unto Jacob, "Arise, go up to Bethel, and dwell there; and make there an altar unto God, that appeared unto thee when thou fleddest from the face of Esau, thy brother. Then Jacob said unto his household, and to all that were with him, Put away the strange gods that are among you, and be clean, and change your garments: and let us arise, and go up to Bethel; and I will make there an altar unto God, who answered me in the day of my distress, and was with me in the way which I went." Let us REVIEW THE TRANSACTION TO WHICH THESE WORDS REFER —DRAW FORTH SOME OF THE INSTRUCTIONS IMPLIED IN THEM—AND DISTINGUISH THE CHARACTERS IN THIS ASSEMBLY, WHO ARE CONCERNED IN THE COMMAND AND THE EXAMPLE— "Arise, and go up to Bethel." "Let us arise, and go up to Bethel; and I will there make an altar unto God, who answered me in the day of my distress, and was with me in the way which I went."

PART I. The passage before us refers to a very interesting part of the history of Jacob, which it will be necessary for us to review.—To escape the fury of his brother Esau, Jacob, by the proposal of his mother, goes to Padan-Aram, to the house of his uncle Laban. On the first night of his journey he dreamed. He saw a ladder reaching from earth to heaven; angels ascending and descending upon it, and God above it, in a posture of attention, "standing" and viewing a poor pilgrim below. He also spake. He assured him of the relation in which he stood to his pious ancestors; and promised to give the land of Canaan to his seed, to render his progeny illustrious and innumerable, and eventually in one of his descendants to bless all the families of the earth. To accommodate Himself still more to the exigencies of his condition, He added, "Behold, I am with thee; and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest, and will bring thee again into this land: for I will not leave thee until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of." Deeply impressed with the scene and the language, Jacob arose; and, before he proceeded on his journey, "VOWED A VOW, saying, If God will be with me, and will keep me in the way that I go, and will give me bread to eat and raiment to put on, so that I come again to my father's house in peace; then shall the Lord be my God, and this stone which I have set for a pillar shall be God's house, and of all that thou shalt give me I will surely give the tenth unto thee." If he wished to lay God under an additional bond, it marks his infirmity: God had spoken, and Jacob should have been satisfied. But it was wise and pious to bind himself. Some have been inclined to censure Jacob, as too conditional, and too selfish, on this occasion; supposing he engaged only to serve God, provided he should be indulged with the blessings he implores. This would have been censurable indeed, and utterly opposite to the faith of the patriarchs, one of whom said, "Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him;" and another of whom, when commanded, "obeyed, and went out, not knowing whither he went." The meaning is, that God, by these fresh instances of his favour, would furnish him with fresh motives to serve and glorify Him; and he stipulates the manner in which he would discharge the obligation he should be laid under.

After the twenty years of hard service in the house of his uncle, Jacob resolves to return. Three days after his departure, Laban pursues him. He overtakes him in Gilead, is pacified, and withdraws. Jacob moves on—crosses the ford of Jabbok—descends on its southern bank—reaches the ford of Succoth—wrestles with the angel—passes over the river Jordan westward, and comes to Shalem. This was an eventful position. Here he bought a piece of ground of Hamor; here he raised an altar; and here befel him the affliction he experienced in the seduction of his daughter, and the murder of the Shechemites. Here he lingers till seven or eight years have elapsed—O Bethel, how art thou forgotten! O Jacob, where is your vow to repair thither as soon as you returned! Your God has fulfilled his engagement—He has been with you—defended you—prospered you—and you are come back in peace. Where is your altar? Where the tenth of your possessions to maintain it?—We may compare one character with another. Behold David. What is he saying! "I will go into thy house with burnt offerings; I will pay thee my vows, which my lips have uttered, and my mouth hath spoken, when I was in trouble."—Hannah occurs. I see her in the bitterness of her soul, praying and weeping sore. "And she vowed a vow, and said, O Lord of Hosts, if thou wilt indeed look on the

affliction of thine handmaid, and remember me, and not forget thine handmaid, but wilt give unto thine handmaid a man-child, then I will give him unto the Lord all the days of his life, and there shall no razor come upon his head."—He is born; and his very name shall be a remembrancer. He is weaned; and she takes him with her, and brings him into the house of God in Shiloh, and introduces him to Eli. "And she said, O my lord, as thy soul liveth, my lord, I am the woman that stood by thee here praying unto the Lord. For this child I prayed, and the Lord hath given me my petition which I asked of him: therefore also I have lent him to the Lord; as long as he liveth he shall be lent to the Lord." O what were her feelings in this journey! What a contention between the mother and the saint! What a trial was here!—an only child—a child long desired, and endeared by a thousand considerations—to give HIM up—to resign him FOR EVER—to see him ONCE a year only, to renew the pain of separation! What a superior delicacy, fervour, permanency, is there in the devotion of this female! How does the patriarch vanish from a comparison of this pious woman!

—Here Jacob still lingers, and discovers no disposition to perform his vow; and it becomes necessary for God himself to address him. "And God said unto Jacob, Arise, go up to Bethel, and dwell there; and make thee an altar unto God, that appeared unto thee when thou fleddest from the face of Esau thy brother. Then Jacob said unto his household, and to all that were with him, Put away the strange gods that are among you, and be clean, and change your garments: and let us arise, and go up to Bethel; and I will make there an altar unto God, who answered me in the day of my distress, and was with me in the way which I went." From these words—

PART II. We may derive some instructive and useful observations.

First, we may remark how soon the influence of impressive scenes wears away, and how prone we are to lose the sense of our mercies, and all the religious feelings they produce.—If a person had seen Jacob on the morning after his vision, and when he was leaving the place made sacred by his experience and engagement there; and had said to him, "God will accomplish thy desire: he will guide thee and keep thee; provide for thee, and bring thee back, enriched and multiplied, to see thy native land—and thou, wilt thou think nothing of all this; wilt thou live year after year unmindful of Bethel, and suffer thy vow to lie unperformed?"—the prophecy would have been incredible; he would have exclaimed, "Can I ever thus trifle with God, or become insensible to such a benefactor?" "What! is thy servant a dog, that he should do this thing?"—How were the Israelites affected when God appeared to them! "They sang his praise." They resolved to distrust him no more. They said, "All that the Lord commandeth us will we do." "But they soon forgat his works, and the wonders which He had shewn them." They murmured again; rebelled again; all their mercies were written in the sand, and the first returning wave of trouble washed them out. —Hence David lays an embargo upon his thoughts: "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and FORGET not all his benefits." It would be well, if we could identify and secure our feelings in certain periods and conditions of life, that we might afterwards review them, compare ourselves with them, perceive our declensions and deficiencies; and bring forward these former experiences—when we grow cold, to warm us; and when we grow slothful, to quicken us. A faithful recollection is of peculiar importance to the Christian: things can impress the mind no longer than they are in it; and lapses in the memory occasion failures in the life. But, alas! like a sieve, full while in the river, but, when raised up, empty and dropping; and as water, which has a natural tendency to be cold, but requires a perpetual fire to keep it warm; so treacherous are our memories in divine things; so constantly do we need means and helps; so necessary is it to have our "minds stirred up by way of remembrance."

Secondly, God will remind his people of forgotten duties. And he can never be at a loss for means to admonish us. He addresses us by his providence. The design of affliction is to bring our sin to remembrance. Sometimes the cause of affliction is not so obvious; and we say, with Job, "Shew me wherefore thou contendest with me." At other times, there is a wonderful correspondence between the crime and the calamity: the one is not only the consequence, but the discovery of the other, and leads back the mind instantly to it.—When God brings us into new difficulties, and we apply for relief, our former deliverances and indulgences are remembered; and our ingratitude, in not duly acknowledging and improving them, stares us in the face, and destroys the liberty and life of prayer.—Have you succoured a fellow-creature, and is he thankful? Can you hear his praises for your petty favours, and not be reminded of your obligations to God for benefits infinitely superior? Or is he unthankful and unworthy! Here is a glass held up as you pass along, in which you may catch a glance of your own image:—"How much more unthankful and unworthy have I proved to my Almighty Friend, whose goodness and mercy have followed me all the days of my life!"—He renews recollection by means of his word. The Scripture is not only "profitable for doctrine; but reproof, correction, and instruction in righteousness." It not only affords a word in season for him that

is weary, but for him that is careless and lukewarm. By this the secrets of the heart are made manifest. And happy are those who are willing to apply this touchstone; to use this balance of the sanctuary; to take this candle of the Lord, and examine the chambers of imagery within; and who, when they have done all, will invite a severer scrutiny —"Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me, and know my thoughts; and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting."—Ministers are God's remembrancers. Their business is, not to bring strange things to your ears, to entertain you with novelties, or to encourage in you a fondness for those speculations which bear slightly on the heart and life: but they are to recal your attention to things which, though the most simple, are the most important, and at the same time the most neglected; to remind you of things already known; to impress you with things already believed; to place your practice opposite your faith, and your lives by the side of your profession. "I will therefore put you in remembrance of these things, though ye once knew them"—here is our example. "If thou put the brethren in remembrance of these things, thou shalt be a good minister of Jesus Christ"—this is our commendation.—God has also an internal witness and monitor: it is conscience: and if in its natural state it has power to accuse the transgressor, how much more influence will it possess when renewed and sanctified!

Thirdly, gracious characters are alive to Divine intimations.—Herein we perceive a difference between them and others. They are encompassed with infirmity; they may err; they may fall: but there is in them a principle which secures their rising again; they are open to conviction, they welcome reproof; they melt, retract, reform, and are watchful and prayerful to prevent similar miscarriages in future. A man asleep only, is very distinguishable from a person dead; the difference will appear as soon as you endeavour to awake them: the one is unsusceptible; the other stirs, inquires, springs up. A living bough may bend down to the earth under a pressure; but remove the load, and it is upright again, and points heavenward. Elihu finely describes the feelings of a pious mind under Divine correction—"Surely it is meet to be said unto God, I have borne chastisement, I will not offend any more. That which I know not, teach thou me: if I have done iniquity, I will do no more." When our Lord looked only upon Peter, "he went out and wept bitterly."—Jacob does not argue the matter with God; does not vindicate himself; does not extenuate his fault. The Lord employs no severe language; nor is it necessary: a soft word subdues him—"It is too plain to be denied, and too bad to be excused. I have sinned: what shall be done unto thee, O thou Preserver of men! I will acknowledge my transgression. I will be sorry for my sin. I will forsake it. Duty neglected, alas! so long, shall be no longer neglected. Thy voice I hear; thy command I hasten to obey." Such was the meaning of his words, and of his practice. For he does not delay or hesitate: "Then Jacob said unto his household, and to all that were with him, Put away the strange gods that are among you, and be clean, and change your garments; and let us arise, and go up to Bethel."—From hence we may observe also,

Fourthly, that holy preparations become the service of God.—They are generally deemed necessary for ministers: it is supposed they ought to be previously alone—to fix their attention; to impress their minds; to implore the Divine assistance and blessing. But have hearers no need of this? Are they to engage in the worship of God, entirely regardless of the nature, the importance, and the influence of divine institutions? To omissions of this kind it is owing, that ordinances in our day are become as unprofitable as they are common.—If before you came together you retired, and endeavoured to obtain an abstraction of mind—if, by reflection, you procured a seriousness of frame, so friendly to devotion—if, by examining yourselves, you discovered what sinful prejudice, or passion, was likely to render you partial hearers—if you formed a resolution to lay yourselves open to the influence of the word, and to rectify whatever appeared to be wrong—if you remembered that you are accountable even for your attendance, and that the word you hear will judge you in the last day—if you came with eager desire and earnest expectation, founded on the promise of God, that he is the rewarder of them that diligently seek him; and, above all, with prayer, knowing that "neither is he that planteth any thing, nor he that watereth, but God who giveth the increase:"—were you thus to enter on the service of the sanctuary—I ask, would there not be a natural tendency in all this to render the means of grace impressive and efficacious? and is not this the only authorized way in which you can hope for the Divine blessing? Careless entering upon duty is rarely profitable. God may meet us unawares; but where has he promised to do it? "Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you." "Keep thy foot when thou goest to the house of God." "Offer not the sacrifice of fools." "Take heed how ye hear." "Wherefore lay apart all filthiness, and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls." These are the commands of God; and they regulate our hope, as well as our practice. And in this manner our good old forefathers worshipped. Then, public services were not so multiplied

as to abridge, if not exclude, the duties of the family and the closet. Then, hearing the word was not rendered a customary, common, and trifling entertainment. With them, divine worship was an awful thing: they prepared for one duty, by another; and, like wise performers, they tuned the instruments before the concert began.

Fifthly, There may be wickedness in a religious family.—We find "strange gods" even in Jacob's household. We may view iniquity in such a situation two ways. First, as a good man's affliction:—and a dreadful affliction it will prove. It is bad to have sickness in his house, but it is worse to have sin, the plague and pestilence of the soul. How, says he, can I bear to see the destruction of my kindred!—Secondly, as a good man's fault. Could we see things as God does, and be able to trace back effects to their causes, we should soon perceive the source of the disorders and wickedness which prevail in many houses.—Masters of families! have you ruled well the charge which God has given you? Have you behaved toward your servants, as remembering you have a Master in heaven? Have you shewn them a kind and a pious attention? Have you had your children in subjection? Have you trained them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord? Have you instructed them only in particular dogmas; or impregnated them with the spirit of Christianity, and endeavoured to render its duties lovely and practicable? Have you not provoked them to wrath till they are discouraged? Or has not your indulgence become connivance; so that you have resembled Eli, whose "sons made themselves vile, and he restrained them not?"—or David, "who had never displeased Adonijah at any time, in saying, Why hast thou done so?" Have you maintained order; or lived in a confusion favourable to every evil work? Has daily devotion been seriously performed? Have you enforced all by your own walk and conversation? Have you set no evil thing before your eyes? While you have preached meekness in words, have you not recommended passion by example? While you have taught them humility by precept, have you not enforced pride by practice?—And are YOU surprised to find irregularities in YOUR family! Wonder, if you please;—but wonder at your own folly in seeking by the way-side to "gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles." Complain, if you please;—but complain of yourselves. Are you so unreasonable as to expect to "reap where you have not sown, and to gather where you have not strewed?

Again, we remark, That our religious concern should not be confined to ourselves only: we are to engage our families to accompany us in the exercises of devotion.—Thus Jacob would not go alone, but calls upon his household, and all that are with him: each must prepare, and each must attend. And of Abraham says God, "I know him, that he will command his children and his HOUSEHOLD after him; and he shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment; that the Lord may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him." In the same disposition was Joshua, who said, "As for me and my HOUSE, we will serve the Lord." We may add the centurion: He feared "God with all his HOUSE." In your own families you possess authority and influence: "a father has honour, a master fear." Servants and children naturally obey. This authority and influence you are to employ for religious, as well as civil purposes; and to vary the exercise of them according to the condition of those who are in family connexion with you—using command with some, persuasion with others, means with all. As the head of a family, you are to mind the souls of those who are under your care, as well their bodies. They are not designed to live here only, or principally; they are hastening into eternity. And you are not to live here always: you will soon be called "to give an account of your stewardship;" and you will be judged, not only as an individual, but as the owner of an HOUSEHOLD: after the man has been tried, the master will be summoned. O that you may "give up your account with joy, and not with grief!"—Even here you have the advantage of domestic religion: "the voice of salvation and of rejoicing is in the tabernacles of the righteous:" such households only are safe and happy. How pleasing is it to see all the members of a family worshipping God together daily in their own house! How lovely to observe them coming forth in the morning of the Sabbath, all going to the house of God in company! Ministers are encouraged, while they see in such households the nurseries of their churches, and address with pleasure a hopeful assembly, formed by the union of a number of amiable, orderly, serious families. But they are pained to see you disjoined, and coming in alone; the father without the son, the mother without the daughter. I intimate here the propriety not only of your engaging your families in religious duties, but of taking them along with you, as far as circumstances will allow, to the SAME place of worship? Thus you will be certain of their attendance; they will be under you. eye; they will be preserved from that fastidiousness and vagrancy of mind, so much cherished by loose and various hearing.

Once more, we may observe, That deliverance claims service—that prayer answered is to become praise.—Jacob resolves to distinguish himself for God, who had appeared so wonderfully for him; and to make the place of mercy, the place of duty—"There will I make an altar unto God, who answered me in the day of my distress, and was with me in

the way which I went."—I see him travelling slowly on with his family—at length he approaches Bethel.—To revisit a place we have not seen for twenty-eight years, is always affecting. Many reflections will naturally arise in a contemplative mind.—"Since I last viewed this spot, what unexpected connections have I formed! What changes have I experienced! I have been led by a way which I knew not—Lover and friend hast Thou put far from me, and my acquaintance into darkness.—How much of life is gone, to return no more! it has passed away like a dream. How little is there, in looking back, upon which the mind can fix with satisfaction! How often have I been deceived in my hopes! How varied does the world now appear! How much more of its vanity do I see, and of its vexation do I feel! It is time to seek a better country. So teach me to number my days, that I may apply my heart unto wisdom."—Jacob is now arrived—he looks around—he deseries, partially covered with moss, the stone which he had set up for a pillar—he embraces it—and calling to his family—"Twenty-eight years ago this very stone was my pillow. Here, destitute of accommodations, I was compelled to sleep: here I passed—my staff all my store;—and hither He has returned me." What mingled emotions does he feel!—what shame! what joy! what condemnation of himself! what praise to the God of Bethel!

Christians, you have no journey to take, no material altar to raise, no animal sacrifice to immolate. "Offer unto God thanksgiving; and PAY THY VOWS unto the Most High. —Whoso offereth me praise, glorifieth me; and to him that ordereth his conversation aright, will I shew the salvation of God."—What say you, Christians?—Have you had no "day of distress, in which He answered" you? Has there been no "way in which He has been with" you, as your guide and your protector? Has He not disappointed your fears, and far exceeded your hopes?—"But Hezekiah rendered not according to the benefits which had been done unto him."—"Were there not ten cleansed? but where are the nine?"—"Go up," says God, "to Bethel, and dwell there."—May you answer, with Jacob, "Let us arise, and go up to Bethel; and there will I make an altar unto God, who answered me in the day of my distress, and was with me in the way which I went." To whom,

PART III. does this apply? and who in this assembly is concerned in the command and the example!

First, Have none of you been advanced in worldly possessions?—Wealth is not always hereditary: Providence sometimes "raiseth up the poor out of the dust, and lifteth up the needy out of the dunghill." Many know what it is to be "abased," as well as what it is to "abound."—Look back to a period, when if you were not embarrassed, you had "none inheritance; no, not so much as to set your foot on."—Remember your feelings when beginning the world. You formed your plans, and endeavoured to secure His assistance, whose "blessing maketh rich, and addeth no sorrow. Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it. It is in vain to rise up early, to sit up late, and to eat the bread of sorrows.—O Lord, I beseech thee, send now prosperity! With such opportunities and capacities, I will promote thy cause, and relieve thy poor. The streams shall remind me of the Fountain. Praise waiteth for thee, O God; and unto thee shall the vow be performed." And He has more than realized your expectations. The staff has long since disappeared, and we behold your two bands: we see abundance, or shall I say extravagance?—Where are your altars, and your offerings? Where are your promised thankfulness and zeal? What have you rendered? What have you done? What are you doing? He calls upon you to follow this example; and to say—"Let us arise, and go up to Bethel; and I will make there an altar unto God, who answered me in the day of my distress, and was with me in the way which I went."

Secondly, Have none of you been led back from "the valley of the shadow of death?"—To think of dying, was awful and affecting. To take a final leave of earth; to drop schemes unfinished; to bid farewell to friends; to see weeping relations; to feel pain of body, and remorse of conscience; to contemplate an opening eternity; and to find the Judge standing before the door—all made you say, "O remember that my life is wind; mine eye shall no more see good. The eye of him that hath seen me, shall see me no more: Thine eyes are upon me, and I am not." "Return, O Lord; deliver my soul: O save me, for thy mercies' sake: for in death there is no remembrance of thee; in the grave who shall give thee thanks?"—You assumed an air of penitence: you promised to render life, if spared, sacred to religion. He heard your prayer, saw your fears, removed the stroke of his heavy hand, renewed your strength, recoloured your cheeks, and placed you in the circle of usefulness and friendship again. But the scene, as it removed to a distance, ceased to impress: your views of this world as you stood on the confines of another, were soon changed: your resolutions are now forgotten, or you blush to recal them: you are ashamed to think that any should have witnessed such instances of "weakness." To remove every notion of your having been serious in them, you plunge deeper in dissipation than before: when these vows occur, you endeavour, by company or pleasure, to banish them. You cried, "Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his!" you asked for serious Christians,

and pious ministers, and said, "Pray for us." These you now shun: you know them not: they would give an edge to memory, and a sting to conscience.—And "is it thus you requite the Lord, O foolish people and unwise?" Look back to the hour of affliction, and of danger—remember thy fears, thy groans, thy prayers, and thy professions.—Go, and acknowledge the Lord that healed thee. Let the physician who prescribed for thee, and those friends who soothed thee on the bed of languishing, have their share of praise: but "the Lord killeth, and maketh alive; He bringeth down to the grave, and raiseth up." Say, with David, "I was brought low, and He helped me: what shall I render unto the Lord for all his benefits towards me? I will take the cup of salvation, and call upon the name of the Lord; I will pay my vows unto the Lord, now in the presence of all his people." Say, with Hezekiah, "The living, the living, he shall praise thee, as I do this day: the father to the children shall make known thy truth. The Lord was ready to save me: therefore we will sing my song to the stringed instruments all the days of our life in the house of the Lord." Imitate Jacob—"Let us arise, and go up to Bethel; and I will build there an altar unto God, who answered me in the day of my distress, and was with me in the way which I went."

Thirdly, Are there no backsliders here?—When you had fallen by your iniquity, did not anguish and horror take hold upon you? Reflecting upon your sin, aggravated by knowledge, and by obligations the most tender and most awful, were you not ready to conclude your case was hopeless? And when at length you were encouraged to approach, and to address the God you had provoked, was not this your language? "Lord, take away all iniquity; receive us graciously; so will we render the calves of our lips. Ashur shall not save us: we will not ride upon horses; neither will we say any more to the work of our hands, ye are our gods: for in thee the fatherless findeth mercy." Cast me not away from thy presence, and take not thy Holy Spirit from me. Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation, and uphold me with thy free Spirit: then will I teach transgressors thy ways, and sinners shall be converted unto thee.—Open thou my lips, and my mouth shall shew forth thy praise." Fulfil your engagements; follow the Patriarch—"Let us arise, and go up to Bethel; and I will build there an altar unto God, who answered me in the day of my distress, and was with me in the way which I went."

Fourthly, What were your feelings, O Christians, when, convinced of sin, you were first led to seek salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ?—Ah! return, ye affecting moments, and remind us of an experience which has long been fled. O what strivings against sin! O what indifference to the world! O what engagements to serve God!—You were willing to follow wherever He should lead; you gloried in the reproach of his cross; "having food and raiment," you were "therewith content." One thing was needful, one concern engrossed you—"Say unto my soul, I am thy salvation."—You succeeded; and you have a good hope through grace. But to what is all this blessed experience reduced?—To this dulness in hearing; to this deadness in prayer; to this murmuring and complaining under trials; to this fear of man which bringeth a snare; to this eagerness for the things of the world:—"Go, and cry in the ears of Jerusalem, saying, Thus saith the Lord, I remember thee, the kindness o thy youth, the love of thine espousals, when thou wentest after me in the wilderness, in a land that was not sown: Israel was holiness to the Lord, and the first-fruits of his increase." "Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love: remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do thy FIRST WORKS."—"Arise, and go up to Bethel, and dwell there; and build an altar unto God, who answered you in the day of your distress, and was with you in the way which you went."

Christians, ye who are always strangers and pilgrims upon earth, look forward to a heavenly country.—When you have reached home; when you have escaped all the dangers to which you are now exposed; when you are possessed of all the goodness promised you in the word of truth—then no forgetfulness—then no need of memorials. All your mercies will arise in view. You will perceive innumerable instances of the Divine goodness, which you are now unable to discover, and will be seen with their enhancing qualities and circumstances. You will bless Him for all the dispensations of his Providence: for the dark, which now perplex; for the painful, which now distress; for the alarming, which now terrify.—"God of all grace, and Father of mercy, thou hast answered me in every day of distress. Thou hast been with me in every way I have travelled. Thou hast suffered me to want no good thing. And here I raise an altar, such as I could not rear in yonder world, where I was encompassed with infirmities. Now I shall serve thee day and night in thy temple, without imperfection, and without end.—Blessed are they that dwell in thy house; they will be still praising thee." Amen.

SERMON IV.

THE TRIUMPHS OF PATIENCE.

Here is the patience of the Saints.

Revelation xiv. 12.

Did you ever observe, my brethren, the exclamation of David—"Mark the perfect man,

and behold the upright, for the end of that man is peace? A religious character is an object truly wonderful and interesting: there is something in him worthy of peculiar notice and regard. David indeed fixes the mind on one article only, and calls upon us to consider his "end." But his way is as remarkable as his end; his life is as deserving of attention as his death; and it is pleasing and useful to observe him in every relation, to pursue him through every condition, and to admire those excellences which unfold themselves, and operate as proofs of his origin, and as pledges of the "glory, and honour, and immortality," to which he tends.

Hence we endeavour to excite you to contemplate successively his various features. Sometimes we have placed him before you as convinced of sin. At other times, as exercising faith on our Lord Jesus Christ. You have seen him "rejoicing in the hope of his calling."—This morning he appears among his "brethren and companions in tribulation," distinguished by the possession and triumphs of patience—"Here is the patience of the saints."—We shall, I. DELINEATE THE CHARACTER OF SAINTS.—II. EXPLAIN THE CONNEXION THERE IS BETWEEN SAINTS AND PATIENCE.—III. And SPECIFY SOME CASES IN WHICH THEIR PATIENCE IS TO BE RENDERED ILLUSTRIOUS, SO AS TO PRODUCE THE EXCLAMATION, "HERE IS THE PATIENCE OF THE SAINTS."

PART I. God has always a people for his name; he owns them to be SAINTS; and they are often found where we should little expect to find them. Thus we read of saints at Corinth, of saints at Ephesus, of saints at Rome, and of saints even "in Cæsar's household."

The title is applied to persons, because they are HOLY ONES. And such are all real Christians, though encompassed with infirmities; as a child full of weakness is human, having the nature though not the stature of a man. They are called holy for two reasons.

The first is taken from their DEDICATION TO GOD. Thus the temple was holy; the vessels of the sanctuary were holy; the first-fruits were holy: the sacrifices were holy. Hence Christians are called, the temple of God—vessels of honour—the first-fruits of every creature—"a sacrifice holy and acceptable." "The Lord hath set apart him that is godly for himself." He is sacred to the Divine service and honour: and if he takes his talents and uses them for any other purpose, he is guilty of sacrilege.

The second is derived from their PERSONAL RENOVATION.—The instruments under the law were only holy by appropriation. No change passed upon them—no change was necessary. It is otherwise with us: for since God finds us in a state wholly unsuited to his service, we must be "made meet for the" great "Master's use." Hence regeneration is necessary, by which we are "renewed in the spirit of our minds, and made partakers of the Divine nature." God may call an angel into his presence and immediately employ him, without a change: he will love the command, and be equal to the work. But does he determine to employ in his service an unregenerate sinner?—He is unqualified; he has neither ability, nor inclination; he is destitute of the spirituality which the work of God requires. Hence the promise, "A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you; and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes; and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them." And with this agrees the declaration of the Apostle: "We are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God has before ordained that we should walk in them."—View him then as he comes from the hands of his New-creator. There is nothing by which he is so much distinguished, as an unconquerable concern for holiness. What does he love?—"I delight in the law of God, after the inner man." What is his grief?—"O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death!" What is his prayer?—"Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me." What is his hope?—That he "shall be like Him, and see him as he is. And having this hope in him, he purifieth himself even as He is pure."—Holiness is the Gospel embodied. The saint exhibits it alive. The Gospel is holy; its Author holy; its maxims and its commands, holy; its promises, ordinances, designs, holy; and there is nothing by which it is so much distinguished and glorified, as by the holiness which pervades it. My brethren, contemplate the subject in this light more frequently, and do not include every thing, rather than holiness, in your notion of the Gospel. Do not imagine, with some, that it was designed to furnish a substitute for holiness; and that it will excuse your being holy, provided you are orthodox. It bringeth salvation, and is intended to teach you, "that, denying all ungodliness and worldly lusts, you should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world." And remember this important truth—That Christians are called by the Gospel to be saints; that you are Christians only in proportion as you are saints; and that you are no further saints than you are "holy in all manner of conversation and godliness."—We proceed to reflect,

PART II. ON THE CONNEXION THERE IS BETWEEN SAINTS AND PATIENCE.

And FIRST, Saints ONLY have patience.—"The Lord seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart." In his estimation, principle and motive are essential to the goodness of action. A thing may be materi-

ally good, when it is not morally so. A man may give "all his goods to feed the poor, and not have charity:" while a poor widow is held up as an example of benevolence, though she casts into the treasury but two mites. If a law were enacted against luxury and extravagance, a covetous man would be very obedient: but let his avarice, and not the law, have the honour of his obedience.—Apply this to the case before us. A man may endure, and not be patient; there may be no religious principle or motive to influence him: it may be a careless indolence; a stupid insensibility; a kind of mechanical or constitutional fortitude; a daring stoutness of spirit resulting from fatalism, philosophy, or pride. Christian patience is another thing: it is derived from a Divine agency; it is nourished by heavenly truth; it is guided by Scriptural rules. Such is the patience of which we are speaking: and as this is ONLY to be found in the subjects of true holiness, so we may observe,

Secondly, That EVERY saint possesses patience.—They do not indeed possess it in equal degrees; "for one star differeth from another star in glory," but all are stars. All are endued with this virtue. It is one of the fruits of the Spirit; it is an essential part of the Divine image restored in man. The work of God in the soul is not like a piece of statuary, where one part is finished while the rest remains in the block; but it is a creation; and, imperceptible as the beginning may be, there are found all the parts which, increased and developed, produce and display the maturity; all is advanced together, and all is perfect as far as the operation proceeds.—A Christian may be defective in his organs of vision; but who would draw him without eyes?—Who would describe a saint without patience? I wish this to be remembered the more, because there are so many evangelical professors in our day awfully deficient in this instance: their religion has very little to do with their dispositions. They think it necessary for the judgment to be informed, and the practice to be moral; but from one of these to the other religion is to pass without touching the temper which lies between. If they are converted, it seems to be from that which is human to that which is diabolical—they are accusers of the brethren, proud, self-willed, fierce, revengeful. Every trifle makes them explode. Saints in the house of God, they are demons at home. How the religion of the meek and lowly Jesus can live with them, it is impossible to determine—nothing else can.

Thirdly, It HIGHLY becomes saints to CULTIVATE patience. "The ornament of a meek and quiet spirit is in the sight of God of great price." It ennobles the possessor. Some have obtained honour by doing mischief. It has been said by a modern prelate, "One murder makes a villain, a thousand a hero."—The Christian conqueror draws his glory, not from the sufferings of others, but from his own; and nothing renders his character more impressive and useful. It recommends his religion. It carries along with it a peculiar conviction. When a Christian has met with an affliction, that has secluded him from the duties of his calling, deprived him of opportunities of exertion, and confined him to the house of grief; little has he supposed, that he was approaching the most useful period of his life. But this has often been the case: and he has rendered more service to religion by suffering, than ever he did by doing. O what a theatre of usefulness is even a "bed of languishing!" "We are a spectacle to angels," as well as "to the world and to men." The sufferer lies open to their view; and the sight of him—sustained—enduring—glorying in tribulation; draws forth fresh acclamations of praise to that God, whose grace can produce effects so wonderful.—"Here is the patience of the saints." But all his fellow creatures are not excluded; there is generally a circle of relations, friends, neighbours, who are witnesses of the scene. I appeal to their feelings. When you have seen a Christian suffering, in character, with all the composure and majesty of submission—when you have heard him softly saying, "Though I mourn, I do not murmur; why should a living man complain?"—"It is the Lord, let him do what seemeth him good;" "His ways are judgment;" "He hath done all things well;" "I see a little of his perfection, and I believe far more"—has not a voice addressed you—

> "Now see the man immortal; him I mean
> Who lives as such; whose heart, full bent on heaven,
> Leans all that way; his bias to the stars.
> The world's dark shades in contrast set shall raise
> His lustre more; though bright, without a foil.
> Observe his awful portrait, and admire:
> Nor stop at wonder—imitate and live."

Have you not turned aside, and exclaimed, What an efficacy, what an excellency in the religion of Jesus!—"Here is the patience of the saints!" This brings us,

PART III. To specify some CASES in which the patience of the saints is to be rendered ILLUSTRIOUS and STRIKING. We shall mention three. The first concerns PROVOCATION—the second, AFFLICTION—the third, DELAY. Here patience is necessary; and here we behold its triumphs.

First, it is to be displayed in bearing PROVOCATION. "It must needs be that offences will come." Our opinions, reputations, connexions, offices, businesses, render us widely vulnerable. The characters of men are various; their pursuits and their interests perpetually clash. Some try us by their ignorance, some by their folly, some by their perverseness, some by their malice. There are to be found persons made up of every thing disagreeable and mischievous; born only to vex; a burden to themselves, and a torment to all around them.—Here is an opportunity for the triumph of

patience; here is a field in which a man may exhibit his character, and appear a fretful, waspish reptile, or a placid, pardoning god.—We are very susceptive of irritation: anger is eloquent; revenge is sweet: but to stand calm and collected—to suspend the blow, which passion was urgent to strike—to drive the reasons of clemency as far as they will go—to bring forward fairly in view the circumstances of mitigation—to distinguish between surprise and deliberation, infirmity and crime—or, if an infliction be deemed necessary, to leave God to be both the judge and the executioner—this is an excellency in which a Christian should labour to excel.

His peace requires it. People love to sting the passionate. They who are easily provoked, commit their repose to the keeping of their enemies; they lie down at their feet and invite them to strike. The man of temper places himself beyond vexatious interruption and insult. "He that hath no rule over his own spirit, is like a city that is broken down and without walls," into which enter, over the ruins, toads, serpents, vagrants, thieves, enemies—while the man, who in patience possesses his soul, has the command of himself, places a defence all around him, and forbids the entrance of such unwelcome company to offend or discompose.

His wisdom requires it. "He that is slow to anger is of great understanding; but he that is hasty of spirit exalteth folly. Anger resteth in the bosom of fools." Wisdom gives us large, various, comprehensive views of things; the very exercise operates as a diversion, affords the mind time to cool, and furnishes numberless circumstances tending to soften severity. We read of the meekness of wisdom. There is a candour which springs from knowledge.

His dignity requires it. "It is the glory of a man to pass by a transgression." "Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good." The man provoked to revenge is conquered, and loses the glory of the struggle; while he who forbears, comes off a victor, and is crowned with no common laurels: for he that is slow to anger is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his spirit, than he that taketh a city." A flood assails a rock, and rolls off, unable to make an impression; while straws and boughs are borne off in triumph, carried down the stream, "driven with the wind, and tossed."

It is also required by examples the most worthy of our imitation. What provocations had Joseph received from his brethren! but he scarcely mentions the crime, so eager is he to announce the pardon:—"I am Joseph your brother, whom ye sold into Egypt. Now therefore be not grieved, nor angry with yourselves that ye sold me hither; for God did send me before you to preserve life."—Hear David:—"They rewarded me evil for good, to the spoiling of my soul. "But as for me, when they were sick, my clothing was sackcloth: I humbled my soul with fasting, and my prayer returned into my own bosom. I behaved myself as though he had been my friend or brother: I bowed down heavily, as one that mourneth for his mother!"—View Stephen, dying under a shower of stones. He more than pardons; he prays. He is more concerned for his enemies, than for himself: in praying for himself, he stood; in praying for his enemies, he kneeled: he kneeled and said, "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge." A greater than Joseph, a greater than David, a greater than Stephen, is here—He endured every kind of insult: but "when he was reviled, he reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not: but committed himself to Him that judgeth righteously." Go to the foot of the cross, and behold him suffering for us, leaving us an example that we should follow his steps. Every thing conspired to render the provocation heinous: the nature of the offence, the meanness and obligations of the offenders, the righteousness of his cause, the grandeur of his person—all these seemed to call for vengeance. The creatures were eager to punish. Peter drew his sword. The sun resolved to shine on such criminals no longer. The rocks asked leave to crush them. The earth trembled under the sinful load. The very dead could not remain in their graves.—He suffers them all to testify their sympathy, but forbids their revenge: and lest the Judge of all should pour forth his fury, he instantly cries, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." "Here is the patience of"— a God.

Secondly, Patience is to be displayed in SUFFERING AFFLICTION.—"Man is born to trouble, as the sparks fly upwards;" and so far are the saints from being exempted, that we are informed "many are the afflictions of the righteous." We shall not describe them: we have only to inquire after the temper with which they are to be borne. It is not necessary to be insensible. There is no virtue in bearing what we do not feel. Grace takes away the heart of stone, and patience does not bring it back. You may desire deliverance: but these desires will not be rash, insisting, unconditional; but always closed with —"Nevertheless, not as I will, but as Thou wilt." You may employ means to obtain freedom; but these means will be lawful ones. A suffering Christian may see several ways of release, but he seeks only God's way. "He who confined me shall bring me forth: here will I stand to see the salvation of the Lord, which he will shew me." He would rather endure the greatest calamity, than commit the least sin: and while the affliction remains, there is no rebellious carriage, no foaming expressions, no hard thoughts of God, no charging him foolishly. He calmly

acquiesces in a condition, of the disadvantages of which he is fully sensible: his patience keeps him in the medium between presumption and despair; between despising "the chastening of the Lord, and fainting when rebuked of him;" between feeling too little, and too much.

—Here then is another field, in which patience may gather glory. Affliction comes to exercise and illustrate our patience. "The trial of your faith worketh patience." It does so in consequence of the Divine blessing, and by the natural operation of things: for use makes perfect; the yoke is rendered easy by being worn; and those parts of the body which are most in action, are the most strong and solid. And therefore, you are not to excuse improper dispositions under affliction oy saying, "It was so trying, who could help it?" This is to justify impatience by the very means which God employs on purpose to make you patient. Be assured the fault is not in the condition, but in the temper. Labour therefore to display this grace in whatever state you are, and however afflicted you may be. Impatience turns the rod into a scorpion. Till you wipe your eyes from this effusion of tears, you cannot see what God is doing; and while the noisy passions are so clamorous, his address cannot be heard.—Suppose you were lying on a bed of pain, or walking in the field under some heavy affliction; suppose you were alone there, and heard a voice which you knew to be the voice of God—"Do not imagine your case is singular. There has been sorrow like unto thy sorrow. Take the prophets, who have spoken in the name of the Lord, for an example of suffering affliction, and of patience. You have heard of the patience of Job. He was stripped of all—yet he said, the Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away, blessed be the name of the Lord.—What! shall we receive good at the Lord's hands, and shall we not receive evil? Consider the unparalleled sufferings of thy Saviour. But he said, The cup which my Father giveth me to drink, shall I not drink it?—Do not imagine these trials are fruits of my displeasure: as many as I love, I rebuke and chasten. I design thy welfare; and I know how to advance it. You have often been mistaken; and sometimes you have been led to deprecate events, which you now see to have been your peculiar mercies. Trust me in this dispensation: reasons forbid my explaining things fully at present: what I do, thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter. In the mean time, be assured, I do not afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men. These troubles are as necessary for thy soul, as medicine for the body, as the furnace for gold, as the knife for the vine. Be not afraid of the affliction; I have it completely under my management; when the end is answered I will remove it. I know how to deliver. Till then, fear not, for I am with thee; be not dismayed, for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will keep thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness."—O could I hear this; this would hush each rebellious sigh, this would check every murmuring thought. Is this then supposition? Has not God said all this? Does He not say all this in his word.

Thirdly, Patience is to be exercised under DELAYS.—We as naturally pursue a desired good, as we shun an apprehended evil: the want of such a good is as grievous as the pressure of such an evil; and an ability to bear the one, is as needful a qualification, as the fortitude by which we endure the other. It therefore as much belongs to patience to wait, as to suffer. We read of "the patience of hope:" for patience will be rendered necessary according to the degree of hope. "Hope deferred maketh the heart sick." It is the office of patience to prevent this fainting; and God is perpetually calling for the exercise of it.—He does not always immediately indulge you with an answer to prayer. He hears indeed as soon as you knock, but he does not instantly open the door: and to stand there, resolved not to go without a blessing, requires patience; and patience cries, "Wait on the Lord; be of good courage; and he shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the Lord."—He does not appear to deliver us according to the time of our expectation; and in wo we number days and hours. The language of desire is, "O when wilt thou come unto me?" and of impatience, "Why should I wait for the Lord any longer?"—but patience whispers, "It is good that a man should both hope, and quietly wait for the salvation of the Lord."—To long for pardon, and to feel only an increased sense of guilt; to implore relief, and to be able only to say, "Without are fightings, and within are fears;" to journey in a weary land, and see the way stretching out immeasurably before us, lengthening as we go; to pursue blessings which seem to recede as we advance, or to spring from our grasp as we are seizing them—all this requires "patient continuance in well-doing."—"We have also need of patience, that, after we have done the will of God, we may receive the promises." See the Christian waiting composedly year after year in a vale of tears for an infinite happiness! See the heir of such an inheritance resigned to abide so long in indigence!—Surely it is trying to be detained so many months at anchor off the fair haven, the end of his voyage in view; to have all the glory of the unseen world laid open to the eye of faith; the trials of this life to urge, and the blessings of another to draw; to have earnests to ensure, and foretastes to endear—surely, there is enough to make him dissatisfied to tarry here. And it seems proper for the Christian to be more than willing to go. Should an Israelite fix on

this side the promised land? Is he not commanded to arise and depart hence? Can he love God, unless he wishes to be with Him? Does not the new nature tend towards its perfection?—What wonder, therefore, if we should hear the believer sighing, "O that I had wings like a dove! for then would I flee away, and be at rest. I would hasten my escape from the stormy wind and tempest. Oh! when shall I come and appear before God? When shall I leave the dregs of society, and join the general assembly above? When will my dear connexions, gone before, receive me into everlasting habitations? O how I envy them! O the glories of yonder world! I seem indistinctly to see the shining prize. I seem to hear a little of their melody—O how does that perfume, blown across the river, revive my spirits, and call me away!" But a voice cries, "Be patient, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold the husbandman: he waiteth for the precious fruits of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the former and the latter rain." And the resigned saint answers, "I pray not that He should take me out of the world, but keep me from the evil. I am willing to remain, while He has a station for me to fill, a duty for me to perform, a trial for me to bear. All the days of my appointed time will I wait, until my change come."—"Here is the patience of the saints."

Let us learn then, my brethren, how necessary it is for us to possess this temper of mind: it is of perpetual and universal use. All of you need it, and will need it always. You do not all need genius, learning, wealth —but what will you do in a world like this without patience? How can you be prepared for a succession of encounters, unless you "take to yourselves the whole armour of God?" How can you pass through a wilderness of thorns and briers, unless "your feet be shod with the preparation of the Gospel of peace?" Who can say, "My mountain stands so strong, I shall never be moved?" "If a man live many years, and rejoice in them all, yet let him remember the days of darkness, for they shall be many: all that cometh is vanity." How undesirable is a squeamish appetite, that incessantly requires delicacies: a puny body, that can bear no hardships; a tender frame, that must not be exposed to the variations of the weather: but how much worse is it to have a soft, enervated, pampered constitution of mind, that must be stroked or rocked like a child; that can with extreme difficulty be pleased; that must have every thing according to its fancy. In a state, where so little is left to choice and convenience, and where we are liable to trials and changes every day, we should seek after a general preparation for our passage, and strengthen and invigorate the soul by—patience.

—Labour strenuously, not only to acquire this grace, but to excel in it. Seek higher degrees of it. Exercise it not in one thing—but in every thing, and in every thing—to the end. "Let patience have its perfect work; that ye may be perfect and entire, lacking nothing." There is a God of patience, who giveth more grace. Approach him with enlarged desire, that you may abound in this grace also, "strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power, unto ALL patience and long-suffering with joyfulness."

—And remember, you will not always be called to the exercise of patience. Your "warfare will soon be accomplished." "Yet a little while, and He that shall come will come, and will not tarry." A little more patience, and the wicked shall cease from troubling, and the weary be at rest. A little more patience, and farewell, provocation, affliction, and anxious delays. Patience, having conducted you safe, and being no longer necessary, shall return for more; but it will leave you in a state where all shall be peace, all shall be quietness, all shall be assurance for ever. O BLESS OUR GOD, YE PEOPLE, AND MAKE THE VOICE OF HIS PRAISE TO BE HEARD—FOR THOU, O GOD, HAST PROVED US; THOU HAST TRIED US, AS SILVER IS TRIED: WE WENT THROUGH FIRE AND THROUGH WATER, BUT THOU BROUGHTEST US OUT INTO A WEALTHY PLACE.

SERMON V.

THE SUFFERINGS OF OUR SAVIOUR NECESSARY.

For it became Him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the Captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings.
Hebrews ii. 10.

"My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts." These words, my brethren, contain a reflection always seasonable, always useful, always necessary, when we would "regard the work of the Lord, or consider the operation of his hand." It may be exemplified in numberless instances, but in none so easily and so fully as in the redemption of the world by means of a Mediator, "obedient unto death, even the death of the cross."—The sun never beheld such a scene. History records no such transaction. The scheme would never have entered the mind of any finite intelligence—"It is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes."—"It is the wisdom of

God in a mystery;" and the more we are enlightened from above to examine its sublime contents, the more of their perfection shall we discover, the more worthy of God will they appear. "For it became Him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the Captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings."

I. Behold the CHARACTER OF THE SUPREME BEING:—"FOR WHOM ARE ALL THINGS, AND BY WHOM ARE ALL THINGS;" the original Cause, the final End, of the whole universe of being, material or spiritual; "in heaven, or on earth; visible, or invisible; whether they be thrones or dominions, principalities or powers: all things were created BY Him, and FOR Him."—Nothing is more common for speakers and writers, when they wish to mention esteemed personages, than to describe, rather than to name them. By seizing in our representation something which has endeared or distinguished them; by availing ourselves of some qualities or actions, which have given them peculiar and superior claims; we can bestow deserved honour, and aid the impression we desire to make on the minds of those we address. The admirers of poetry understand me, when I say—"The Author of the Task." My countrymen feel, when I utter—"The Hero of the Nile." The ingenuous youth yields, when I beseech him by the tears of her "who bare him."—We cannot describe God by what he is in himself, but by what he is in his relations, and in his works; by what he does as our Creator and Governor; as one who owns us, and may dispose of us as he pleases;—on whom we entirely depend, and to whom we are universally accountable.

But who can tell how far this "all things" extends! Who can imagine the dimensions of his empire—the diversity of his subjects—the infinite number of his productions, each of which is an expression of his wisdom, power, and goodness, and a source of revenue from which his glory is derived!

And why this magnificence of description?—To fill the mind with reverence. To raise our expectation. To remind us of the End and Author of our salvation. To shew us the principle from which he acts: that it is not necessity, but kindness; that he cannot stand in need of us, or our services, being "exalted above all blessing and praise"—It is, by a display of his majesty, to draw forth our admiration of his mercy. "The Lord is high above all nations, and his glory above the heavens. Who is like unto the Lord our God, who dwelleth on high: who humbleth himself to behold the things that are in heaven and in the earth! He raiseth up the poor out of the dust, and lifteth the needy out of the dunghill, that he may set him with princes, even with the princes of his people." Contemplate then a Being, whose goodness equals his grandeur. Behold him seeking his glory in our welfare. See him, regardless of all our unworthiness, and, before we had expressed any desire, devising means to rescue us from our ignorance, vice, infamy, and misery; and forming a scheme of pure compassion, designed to raise us to a state of happiness, superior to the condition in which man was originally placed. For,

II. Observe THE END which the God of all Grace KEEPS IN VIEW—It is to "BRING MANY SONS UNTO GLORY."—When of old He detached from the nations of the earth a people for his name, he destined them to possess the land of Canaan. This promised country into which he engaged to bring them, excited the departure of the Israelites from Egypt, and encouraged them in all their wanderings in the wilderness. It was a state in which they expected rest, peace, abundance—"A land flowing with milk and honey; a land wherein there was no scarceness; a land on which the Lord's eye was from the beginning even to the end of the year." But this was only a shadow of good things to come; an emblem of that "better," that "heavenly country," towards which "the seed of Abraham by faith" are travelling—where "remains a rest for the people of God"—where "they shall enter into peace"—where they shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more, neither shall the sun light on them nor any heat; "for the Lamb, that is in the midst of the throne, shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes."

This future blessedness of the righteous is very commonly in the Scriptures expressed by "GLORY." It is a state of perfection, of magnificence, of splendour, of honour. It will contain every kind of excellency, and every kind of excellency displayed. The place will be glorious; the company will be glorious; our bodies will be glorious; glorious will be our work, our pleasures, our reward, our praise. We shall have fellowship with the dignified Redeemer; "we shall be glorified together—when HE who is our life shall appear, we shall also appear with him in glory."

We are reminded of the character under which we shall obtain this happiness: it is for "SONS"—not enemies, not strangers. Such the people of God naturally are; but by regeneration and adoption, he gives them the quality and the claims of children; and on this relation the inheritance depends—"If children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ."

Nor will the possessors of it be few in number. The heavenly inheritance is not like the earthly Canaan, confined to the Jews only: Gentiles also participate. The middle wall of partition is broken down, and the Gospel reveals a common salvation, and opens

a passage to heaven from all the diversities of human condition—"MANY SONS" are on their way "to glory." Do not diminish their number by uncharitable exclusions, or reduce it by gloomy suspicions—"Wot ye not what the Scripture saith of Elias, how he maketh intercession to God against Israel, saying, Lord, they have killed thy prophets, and digged down thine altars; and I am left alone, and they seek my life? But what saith the answer of God unto him? I have reserved to myself seven thousand men who have not bowed the knee to the image of Baal." He has always his hidden ones: many more than you are aware of, know his name, and love his salvation: and though his followers may appear a small flock, if viewed in comparison with the ungodly who surround them —when they shall "come from the east, and from the west," and shall be gathered together from "all nations, and kindred, and people, and tongues;" they will be found "a great multitude, which no man can number." —Such is the purpose of grace which he is accomplishing; and,

III. Observe the means by which he executes his design—He constitutes Jesus Christ "THE CAPTAIN OF THEIR SALVATION."—God does nothing immediately with man. He carries on all his transactions with us through a Mediator. The restoration of his people, including their redemption, conversion, perseverance, and future glory, is committed to Him; and with Him we have immediately to do in all the concerns of faith, holiness, and consolation.

When God would bring the Israelites into the land of promise, he placed them under the guidance of Joshua: when he would bring innumerable myriads of perishing sinners to glory, he puts them under the conduct of the Lord Jesus Christ. Hence they are so often said to be given to him by the Father.—They are given to him, not that he may receive benefit from them, but that they may receive benefit from him. As so many captives, they are given him to ransom as their Redeemer; as so many sheep, for him to feed as their Shepherd; as so many scholars, for him to educate as their Teacher; as so many soldiers, for him to lead along to victory and triumph, as "the Captain of their salvation."

For the term by which He is here held forth, carries with it an implication that there are difficulties to be encountered in the way to glory, and obstacles to be overcome—that the Christian life is a warfare—and that as soon as we turn our "faces Zion-ward," we must expect to fight. With this accord the language of the Scripture, and the experience of every good man. And, my dear hearers, if you think otherwise, you are deceived. You may go asleep to hell, but you cannot go asleep to heaven. It is exertion, opposition, contention, every step of the way. Did they who have gone before you find religion an easy thing? What was their language? "Lord, how are they increased that trouble me! Many there be that rise up against me: many there be which say of my soul, There is no help for him in God." "We wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places."—There are some here this morning, who are compelled to use the same language. Yes, "without are fightings, and within are fears." Your enemies are numerous and powerful; and, compared with them, you feel yourselves to be nothing. But you are not without encouragement. Your "Redeemer is mighty"—Jesus is "the Captain of your salvation." "He teaches" your "hands to war," and your "fingers to fight." He arrays you in "the whole armour of God." He issues orders, and regulates all your motions. He goes before, and animates you by his own example. He replenishes your strength; treads down your enemies before you; makes you more than conquerors; and gives you a crown of life. Whence, "O worm Jacob," are you so courageous? How can you "thresh the mountains?" The way is distressing; the country through which you travel is formidable—How will you be able to reach the land, that is to be given you, very far off?—"Jesus Christ is every thing I need: he is given for a leader, and a commander to the people. I place myself under his care. He will go where I go; and engage the foes I engage. He will leave me in no situation: his skill is infinite, his power is almighty. He has led thousands, not one failing. On him I lean: because he lives, I shall live also. If I have not struck a blow, I may strike with confidence; or if I have fallen through a blow received, I can say, Rejoice not against me, O mine enemy: though I fall, I shall arise; though I sit in darkness, the Lord will be a light unto me."

"A Friend and Helper so divine
Does my weak courage raise,
He makes the glorious victory mine,
And his shall be the praise."

The Jews always expected that the Messiah would be "the Captain of their salvation:" they looked for him in no other character. But, mistaking the nature of this salvation, they grossly erred with regard to the nature of his work. They conceived of him as a temporal prince, who would rush forth with his "sword upon his thigh, conquering and to conquer;" subduing the nations of the earth, and giving "his people the heritage of the Heathen." To their carnal minds, the manner of his victory was a paradox. They could not conceive how he could overcome by dying, or by a cross reach the

throne: "We have heard out of the law that Christ abideth for ever: and how sayest thou, then, the Son of man must be lifted up?"—But in this way he was "to be crowned with glory and honour." His sufferings were not opposed to his exaltation; they led to it; and the Apostle,

IV. Reminds us of THE MANNER IN WHICH he obtains his distinction, and is prepared for the discharge of his office—he "IS MADE PERFECT THROUGH SUFFERINGS."—The sufferings of the Saviour are described in the Gospels with simplicity and grandeur combined. Nothing can add to the solemnity and force of the exhibition; and if we are not affected with the relation, it shews that our hearts are harder than the rocks, which could not retain their insensibility when "the Lord of life and glory" expired. The subject has often come under your review.—Sometimes we have called upon you to consider his sufferings as peculiar and unparalleled; and you have heard a plaintive Saviour saying, "Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by? Behold, and see if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow, which is done unto me, wherewith the Lord hath afflicted me in the day of his fierce anger."—We have sometimes considered his sufferings as foreknown, and led you to imagine what were his feelings while reading the prophecies, or foretelling, himself, the circumstances of his passion. From your eye futurity is kindly concealed. Could some of you be immediately informed of the troubles through which perhaps one year only will require you to wade, you would be overwhelmed in the prospect. But He saw the end from the beginning, and advanced, with Judas, and the high-priest, and the nails, and the cross, full in view.—You have seen that his sufferings were not the sufferings of an hour or a day; they were perpetual: from Bethlehem to Calvary, "he was a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief."—You have seen him suffering in his condition, in his character, in his body, in his soul.—You are now led to another view of the same interesting subject—the accomplishment which our Saviour derived from them: he was "made perfect through sufferings." It may be exemplified in two respects: first, by way of discovery; secondly, by way of qualification.

In perusing history, what characters principally engage, and improve us? Those who have struggled through trying and awful scenes. Read the Scriptures: fix your eyes on Job, and Joseph—on David, and Daniel, and Paul. Were they not all "made perfect through sufferings?" The picture would have no beauty or effect without shades. It is on the rainy cloud the heavenly bow spreads its variegated tints. The character of the hero is formed, and his laurels are gathered, only in the hostile field, among "the confused noise of warriors, and garments rolled in blood." Never was the glory of a prince, however illustrious, rendered complete, without some sudden reverse of fortune, which tried him; some heavy calamity, under which he had an opportunity to discover his internal resources. That nobility is the truest, which a man derives, not from his pedigree, but from himself: that excellency is the greatest, which is personal: that glory is the most estimable, which is fixed in our intellectual and moral attributes—not that which a man locks up with his cash, or puts by with his ribbon: all these are extrinsical: they are no parts of the man; they are appendages; and additions suppose deficiencies—he is the most perfect who needs them not. Suppose our Saviour had passed through the world smoothly, attended with all the littleness of riches, and the insignificance of pomp; how limited would have been his example! how insipid the narrative of his life! how uninteresting his character!—If there had been any thing of the beautiful, there would have been nothing of the sublime. How does he appear "Christ, the wisdom of God, and the power of God!" As "crucified." Where did he spoil "principalities and powers, making a show of them openly, and triumphing over them?" On the "Cross." To what period does he refer, when he says, "Now is the judgment of this world; now shall the prince of this world be cast out?" The hour of his death. This he viewed as the season in which he was to be magnified and adored—"The hour is come, that the Son of man should be glorified." This was the consummation of his unexampled career of excellence: "I must do wonders to-day and to-morrow, and the third day I must be perfected." Here is the finish; and the wonders and miracles which attended his sufferings, were not to be compared with the principles and graces which he displayed in enduring them. Of what in his history did Moses and Elias speak, when they appeared in the transfiguration? "They spake of the decease which he was to accomplish at Jerusalem." In what does every Christian rejoice? "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ." What is the theme of every minister? "I determined to know nothing, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified." What is the language of the glorified above? "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain." Thus the sufferings of the Saviour were the means of displaying the glories of his character, and of procuring for him unbounded and everlasting honours.

We are also to consider him relatively: for he interposed on our behalf; and having engaged for a particular purpose, whatever qualified him for the execution of it, tended to make him perfect. Hence a body was prepared him. Hence the miseries he endured. "Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself like-

wise took part of the same: that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the Devil; and deliver them who, through fear of death, were all their lifetime subject to bondage. For verily he took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham. Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren; that he might be a merciful and faithful high-priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people." We shall see more of this,

V. By examining the REASONABLENESS and EXPEDIENCY of such a dispensation—"IT BECAME HIM."—In proportion to the greatness of a character, will be his conviction of the importance of order; and the more necessary will it be for him to observe it; because of the number of his relations, the diversity of his connexions, and the influence of his example. Order is essential to virtue and to happiness in creatures; and God himself is the pattern of it. There is nothing in him like tyranny: he is influenced by reason. Though independent, he is governed by rules; though sovereign, he submits to laws; and only does what "becomes him."

But we are never more liable to presumption and mistake, than when we take upon us to decide what the Supreme Being ought to do; or when, having laid down a particular system, we suppose he must conform to it, or forfeit his character in the eyes of the universe. Such daring language we have sometimes heard—but, O ye judges of the Almighty, "who hath known the mind of the Lord, or, being his counsellor, hath taught him? To whom will ye liken me, or shall I be equal, saith the Holy One?—His way is in the sea, and his path in the great waters, and his footsteps are not known."

There is a period approaching, in which our capacity for examination will be enlarged, the prejudices which bias our minds will be done away, and the plan of Divine Providence and Grace will be accomplished and explained:—THEN the reasons of his proceedings will be as satisfactory to us, as they will prove honourable to him; THEN all that is now dark will be enlightened, all that is now disorderly will be arranged, all that is now detached and scattered will be united in one beautiful whole; and we shall see that nothing was defective, nothing superfluous, nothing insignificant: that every thing was necessary—nothing could be added to it—nothing could be taken from it. But it may be asked, Is there no satisfaction to be obtained before this illustrious period arrives? There is. For if we can ascertain that God has pursued any particular mode of action, we may immediately infer the rectitude of it from the acknowledged perfection of the Divine character; and there is no medium between this, and "charging him foolishly." He does not use means uncertainly, or to try their success: at one view he sees unerringly his end, and his way to it. But again. If He has told us himself that such a step became him, we are bound to believe him, however strange and exceptionable it may appear to us. And if, in addition to this, He has condescended to shed some light upon the subject, we are thankfully to avail ourselves of it.

My brethren, we may apply all this to the subject before us. We know He did "make the Captain of our salvation perfect through sufferings," and "his ways are judgment." He has expressly assured us, in his word, that it became him to do so; and as he is not mistaken, so he cannot deceive. He has also discovered enough of his motives to satisfy every humble inquirer, and to draw forth our admiration: "O the depth of the riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge of God!"—But all this is too general. Let us specify a few particular reasons which he has enabled us to assign, from which the expediency of the sufferings of our Saviour will appear.

The first is derived from the necessity of experience in our Guide. For how desirable was it that he who was appointed to lead us to glory, should himself be personally acquainted with the dangers, difficulties, and trials, to which his followers are exposed in their way thither! Nothing would so powerfully engage the confidence which we are to place in him. Experience in every case encourages application and dependence. But see the afflicted. It is not to the gay and prosperous, but to those who have been in misery themselves, that they approach with pleasure, and with a conviction that they shall not be heard in vain, when they cry, "Pity me, pity me, O ye my friends; for the hand of God hath touched me." Sympathy is produced and cherished by experience. If you have endured the sorrow under which you behold a fellow-creature labouring, you can enter into his views, feel his sensations, and weep with him. Who are the most kind and humane? Those who have been much in the school of affliction. There the social and tender affections are nurtured. "Be kind to strangers," says God to Israel: why? "for ye know the heart of a stranger, for ye were strangers in a strange land." The high-priest under the law was "taken from among men, that he might have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way, for that he himself also is compassed with infirmity." All this is grandly applicable to our Lord and Saviour; "for in that he himself hath suffered, being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted." Though his state is changed, his nature is the same; "for we HAVE not an High Priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin." This opens a

source of exquisite consolation; and we feel the pleasing motive—"Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need." He "knows your sorrows." Are you poor! He knows your indigence; not like some of your wealthy neighbours, who may accidentally hear of it by report, while they are indulging only in luxury—He was poor: "foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of man had not where to lay his head." Do you suffer reproach; and are things laid to your charge which you know not? He sees you, who was once deemed "a glutton, and a wine-bibber, a friend of publicans and sinners, a Samaritan, one who had a devil, a stirrer up of the people." Do you feel evil suggestions? The enemy approached him:

"He knows what sore temptations mean,
For he has felt the same."

Are you looking forward to the hour of death? Your fellow Christians, and your ministers, endeavour to sustain and to soothe you: but all this comes from persons who have no experience—they know not what it is to die—but One will be near, "to comfort you upon your bed of languishing," who has passed through the trying scene; who knows the feelings of human nature in the separation of soul and body: in leaving beloved friends and relations—

A second reason is to be derived from his example. It was necessary for him to shew us the influence of holiness in a state of suffering. Afflictions are unavoidable; they occupy a large proportion of life, and of godliness; many parts of religion relate entirely to suffering, and every part receives a lustre from it. The Christian is more formed from his trials, than from his enjoyments. But we are like bullocks unaccustomed to the yoke; we are unskilled in the science of passive obedience; even after the experience of years of sorrow, we know little of the holy mystery "of suffering affliction and of patience." We need instruction:—"How am I to carry the cross? How can I render it one of my chief blessings? What dispositions am I to exercise towards God, who is the Author of this trouble? or towards men, who are the instruments of it? How must I regulate my thoughts, words, and carriage? Am I forbidden to feel, as well as to murmur? Must I indulge no desire, use no means of relief!" Go, anxious inquirer, and contemplate him who "suffered for us, leaving us an example that we should follow his steps." See him enduring every indignity—but "when he was reviled, he reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not, but committed himself to Him that judgeth righteously." Hear his prayer for his murderers—"Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." Mark his language in the garden—"Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt." In all this he does not so much dazzle as guide. Here are none of those high-flown rhapsodical expressions, which proud philosophy has often placed in the mouths of its heroes: he affects no insensibility of pain; no indifference to suffering. We see humanity with all its natural feelings—only these feelings held under the empire of reason and of grace.—"Let the same mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus."

A third reason is to be found in the demonstration which his sufferings gave us of the Divine benevolence. Awakened souls find it no easy thing to believe in God. Conscious of the wrong their sins have done him, and judging of the Supreme Being by themselves, it is hard to persuade their guilty minds that God is ready "to be pacified towards them for all their abominations;" and that, after such provocations, he is willing to "receive them graciously, and love them freely." Now I cannot love God, till He appears lovely. I shall never approach him, till I hope in him. Hidden among the trees of the garden, whither my fears have driven me, it is only the voice of mercy that can call me forth. It is confidence alone that can bring me back to God: this is the simple principle of our restoration; till this be gained, nothing can be effected. To place himself before us in this encouraging view; to shew us in himself an accessible refuge, as soon as ever we feel our danger and our misery; to keep us from turning again to folly by the desperate conclusion, "there is no hope;" to scatter all our misgiving fears, and to allure us into his presence—he was pleased to sacrifice his own Son. The inference is easily drawn:—"He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall He not with him also freely give us all things? We behold indeed the love of God in his incarnation, but much more in his sufferings: these suppose the former, and add to it. If he will take one so dear to him, one so worthy, one who always did the things which pleased him, and bring him through such a depth of suffering rather than we should perish, we are convinced that he will not refuse pardon and grace to returning sinners. And to this, the sacred writers call our attention, when they would magnify the goodness of God: "Herein is love; not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and gave his Son to be a propitiation for our sins. God hath commended his love towards us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him. For if when we were enemies we were reconciled unto God by the death of his Son; much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life."

Behold a fourth reason. As Divine Goodness acts in harmony with every other perfection of his nature, the sufferings of our Saviour were designed to display the glory of God, as the moral ruler of the universe. There is no governing without laws; laws are nothing without sanctions. If the penalty attached to the law of God be founded in equity —and were it otherwise, how could he have annexed it?—does not the same principle which led him to propose it, constrain him to maintain it? Suppose a governor, when he establishes a new system of legislation, were to issue a proclamation, that whoever transgressed it should be pardoned upon his repentance and reformation—would not this disarm the law of all its terrors, and rather encourage than repress the violation of it? Is the Gospel such an enemy to the law? "Do we by faith make void the law? Yea, we establish the law." We do not however on this subject go all the lengths into which some advance. We would not "limit the Holy One of Israel." It does not become us to affirm that he could not have pardoned sin without an atonement. Let us remember, the Supreme Majesty is accountable to none; let us not try to fix the bounds of absolute prerogative. Our Saviour in the garden does indeed intimate that the cup could not pass from him: but he resolves this impossibility into the WILL of God. It is sufficient for us to know that in this way God chose to glorify his perfections, and that to US no other way APPEARS, in which we could have had an equal display of the Divine attributes. Justice could have seized the transgressor, or mercy could have spared him; but, in the case before us, both justice and mercy are blended in their exercise: we see the one in requiring this mediation, the other in providing it. The law is secured, and the offender too. Sin is condemned, and the sinner pardoned; and God neither beholds the iniquity, nor the misery of man.—These we conceive to be a few of the reasons why "it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the Captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings."

We close the subject with two reflections.

First, Let not Christians think it "strange" if they should be called to suffer.—Let them learn, "how to be abased, as well as how to abound:" let them determine to pass "through evil report, as well as good report;" and be willing to deny themselves, and take up their cross, and follow him. The Gospel does not deceive us: it informs us only of one way, by which we can reach the crown. In this we see all our brethren walking, and our elder Brother going before them. But we are looking for a smoother passage. We would be children, and not chastised; gold, and not tried; soldiers, and not "endure hardness;" Christians, and not like Christ. Are the members to have no sympathy with the suffering Head! Are you not chosen to "be conformed to his image?" Observe his likeness: see his sorrowful features; how "his visage is marred more than any man's, and his form than the sons of men."—Can you resemble him, and not suffer? Is it not an honour to have fellowship with him in his sufferings? Would you wish for the friendship of that world, whose malice he continually bore? Would you only have ease, where he only had trouble? or nothing but honour, where he had nothing but disgrace? Would you reign with him, and not suffer with him? Can the common soldier complain, when he sees the commander enduring the same privations with himself? "The disciple is not above his master, nor the servant above his lord: it is enough for the disciple, that he be as his master, and the servant as his lord." But, ah! what are your sufferings compared with his? Are you oppressed?—Look before you, and see him carrying a cross infinitely heavier; carrying it for you; carrying it without a groan! "Consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds."

Secondly, if the sufferings of Christ were so variously useful and necessary, and of such high importance in the view of God—can ministers dwell too much upon them in their preaching? Can Christians estimate them too highly, or make too much of them in their meditations, and in the exercises of their faith and of their devotion? And if an ordinance be established in the Church as a memorial of his sufferings, should they not thankfully embrace every opportunity of attending it?

Such, Christians, is the institution of the Lord's Supper, of which you are going to partake.—Approach, and in lively memorials behold "Jesus Christ evidently set forth, crucified among you." "For as oft as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew forth the Lord's death till he shall come." Draw near, and looking on him who was pierced by you, and for you, mourn and rejoice. Draw near, and exercise faith, aided even by the medium of sense; and of the best Object take the best view it is in your power to enjoy—till "you shall see him as he is," and joining a nobler assembly, shall sing the song which you are loving and learning now—"Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father, be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen."

SERMON VI.

THE YOUNG ADMONISHED.

I fear the Lord from my youth.—1 Kings xviii. 12.

THESE are the words of Obadiah. From his situation and office, he appears to have

been a person of some distinction, for "he was the governor of Ahab's house." But what we admire in him, is—The piety that marked his character. "He feared the Lord GREATLY;" and gave evidence of it in a season of extreme danger: "For he took an hundred prophets, and hid them by fifty in a cave, and fed them with bread and water." And as his religion was superior in its degree, so it was early in its commencement. For says he, in his address to Elijah, "I fear the Lord FROM MY YOUTH." And herein, my young friends, we propose him this evening as your example.—In your imitation of him, many are concerned, though none are so deeply interested as yourselves.

—The preacher who addresses you is concerned. He longs "after you all in the bowels of Jesus Christ." Indeed, if ministers desire to be useful, they cannot be indifferent to YOU. You would prove best helpers; you would rouse the careless; you would reproach those of riper years; you would decide the wavering minds of those who are of the same age with yourselves. It is in your power to build up our churches, and to change the moral face of our neighbourhood. "The wilderness and the solitary place shall be made glad" for you, "and the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose."

—Behold standing near your preacher, your friends, your relations, your parents, hearing for you with trembling, and prayers, and tears. Thy father is saying, "My son, if thou be wise, my heart shall rejoice, even mine." The woman who bare thee is saying, "What, my son, and what the son of my womb, and what the son of my vows!"

—Behold too your fellow citizens, your countrymen. I imagine all those assembled here this evening, with whom you are to have any future connexions, by friendship, by alliance, by business; whose kindred you are to espouse, whose offices you are to fill—these I ask—Is it a matter of indifference, whether the rising generation be infidel and immoral, or influenced by conscience, and governed by the fear of God? Where is the person, who has any regard for the welfare of the nation, for social order, for relative life, for personal happiness, who would not immediately exclaim, "Rid me and deliver me from the hand of strange children; whose mouth speaketh vanity, and their right hand is a right hand of falsehood: that our sons may be as plants grown up in their youth; and that our daughters may be as corner-stones, polished after the similitude of a palace."

—Behold the blessed God looking down from heaven, advancing his claims, and urging the language of command, and of promise: "Remember thy Creator in the days of thy youth. They that seek me early, shall find me."

—These are parties concerned in the success of this endeavour. But, my young friends, there are characters here more deeply interested than all these—They are yourselves. To be pious in early years, is to be "wise for YOURSELVES:" it is your privilege, shall I say, more than your duty?—Yes, the gain will be principally your own. How shall I convince you of this? How shall I make you feel the importance of it? Let me take three views of the subject.—We shall CONSIDER YOUTH, AS THE MOST FAVOURABLE SEASON IN WHICH TO COMMENCE A RELIGIOUS COURSE—SHEW THE BENEFICIAL INFLUENCE OF EARLY PIETY OVER YOUR FUTURE LIFE—AND EXAMINE, IN THIS AWFUL CONCERN, THE CONSEQUENCES OF PROCRASTINATION.

PART I. If, unhappily, the wickedness of any of our more aged hearers should have rendered infidelity necessary, and they should have abandoned a system hostile only to sin; "we are persuaded," my young friends, "better things of you." We presume that you are all ready to acknowledge the importance of religion, and that if any of you were asked whether you had resolved never to pursue it, but to live and die in the neglect of it, you would be shocked at the question. Since then you believe godliness to be the one thing needful, and determine on a religious course, I would propose youth as the most favourable season in which to commence it.

It is, first, a period which presents the fewest obstacles.—It is far from my design to hold forth real religion as an easy thing at any period of life. I believe the doctrine of human depravity; I know the images the sacred writers employ, to describe the arduous nature of the spiritual life; I hear our Saviour saying, "Strive to enter in at the strait gate; for many will seek to enter in and shall not be able." But if there be difficulties, these difficulties will increase with our years; and the season of youth will be found to contain the fewest obstacles, whether we consider your external circumstances, your natural powers, or your moral habits. Now, you are most free from those troubles which will embitter, from those cares which will perplex, from those schemes which will engross, from those engagements which will hinder you, in more advanced and connected life. Now the body possesses health and strength; the memory is receptive and tenacious; the fancy glows; the mind is lively and vigorous. Now the understanding is more docile; it is not crowded with notions; it has not, by continued attention to one class of objects, received a direction from which it is unable to turn, to contemplate any thing else, without violence: the brain is not impervious; all the avenues to the inner man are not blocked up. To cure a dead man, and to teach an old one, says a heathen philosopher, are tasks equally hopeless.—Now, the soul is capable of deeper and more abiding impressions; the affections are more easily touched and moved; we are

more accessible to the influence of joy and sorrow, hope and fear: we engage in an enterprise with more expectation, and ardour, and zeal. Evil dispositions also grow with time and are confirmed by exercise. "Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots! then may ye also do good, that are accustomed to do evil." A man wishes to eradicate—but is his task likely to become easier by suffering the shrub to grow year after year till it becomes a tree, and is so deep rooted as to defy even a storm? A disorder has seized the body—but common sense says, Take it in time; send immediately for aid: by continuance, it becomes inveterate, and baffles the skill and the force of medicine. An enemy has declared war—but is he a friend who advises you, instead of advancing forward, and seizing the most advantageous positions, to remain inactive, till the adversary, striding on, gains pass after pass, and fortifies for himself what he has taken from you—till he spreads over your territory, and subsists at your expense, or with impoverished resources compels you to risk every thing on the issue of one desperate encounter? Who is the person intended by all these representations of folly? You, O young man, who by your delays are increasing an hundred fold all the obstacles of a religious life.

Secondly, The days of youth are of all others the most honourable period in which to begin a course of godliness.—Under the legal œconomy, the FIRST were to be chosen for God—the FIRST-born of man; the FIRST-born of beasts; the FIRST-fruits of the field. It was an honour becoming the God they worshipped, to serve him first. This duty, my young friends, you, and you alone can spiritualize and fulfil, by giving Him, who deserves all your lives, the first-born of your days, and the first-fruits of your reason, and the prime of your affections. And never will you have such an opportunity to prove the goodness of your motives, as you now possess—"Now," says God, "I know that thou fearest me."—But see an old man: what does he offer? His riches?—but he can use them no more. His pleasures?—but he can enjoy them no longer. His honour?—but it is withered on his brow. His authority?—but it has dropped from his feeble hand.—He leaves his sins; but it is because they will no longer bear him company. He flies from the world; but it is because he is driven out. He enters the temple; but it is as a sanctuary: it is only to take hold of the horns of the altar: it is a refuge, not a place of devotion, he seeks:—and need we wonder if he should hear a voice from the most excellent glory—"Ye have brought that which was torn, and the lame, and the sick: thus ye brought an offering: Should I accept this of your hands? saith the Lord of hosts. But cursed be the deceiver, who hath in his flock a male, and voweth, and sacrificeth unto the Lord a corrupt thing: for I am a great King, saith the Lord of hosts, and my name is dreadful among the heathen."—But you who consecrate to him your youth—you, do not profanely tell him to suspend his claims till the rest are served; and till you have satisfied the world and the flesh, his degrading rivals. You do not send him forth to gather among stubble the gleanings of life, after the enemy has secured the harvest. You are not like those, who, if they reach Immanuel's land, are forced thither by shipwreck. You sailed thither by intention: when you weighed anchor, you thought of it; it was "the desired haven." You do not shun the world after a long experience of its vanity and vexation; but you have the honour of believing the testimony of God concerning it, and of deciding without a trial. You do not yield to God when every other solicitor is gone: but you adore him while you are admired by others; and, guarding your passions and senses, you press through a thousand allurements, saying, "Whom have I in heaven but Thee, and there is none upon earth that I desire beside Thee." Religion is always an ornament: it does not refuse age; but it looks exquisitely attractive and suitable when worn by youth. In the old, it is alone; it is a whole: it decorates wrinkles and ruins. In the young, it is a connexion and a finish: it unites with bloom, it adds to every accomplishment, gives a lustre to every excellency, and a charm to every grace. And as our early years furnish a season, in which to commence a religious life, attended with the fewest difficulties, and productive of the highest honour; so it is,

Thirdly, the most profitable; and at no other period can we begin so advantageously.—It requires no laboured reasoning to prove this. Only admit that there are innumerable benefits inseparable from religion; that "her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace"—that "godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come"—and the sooner it is embraced, the longer will the privilege be enjoyed. Every hour of neglect, is an hour of loss. Can you be happy too soon? Is it desirable to "feed" another day "upon ashes," while "angels' food" is placed within your view, and within your reach? If there be innumerable evils inseparable from sin; if "the way of transgressors be hard;" if there be "no peace to the wicked;" if "the gall of bitterness" be connected with "the bonds of iniquity;" if "the wages of sin be death;" and "these are the true sayings of God"—then the earlier the deliverance, the greater the privilege. Those who approached our Saviour in the days of his flesh, desired an immediate relief from their oppressing maladies. Bartimeus did not say, "Lord, that I may receive my sight"—but not yet.

The leper did not say, "Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean:" and I hope at some future season I shall be healed; but I cannot resign my disease at present. In another case, a poor wanderer, who has missed his way in a journey of importance, would deem it an advantage to be set right speedily. But you wish first to go far astray: though you must re-tread every step, exhausting your strength and your time by your return, and be in danger of seeing the day end, before you have reached the road in which your journey is to begin.—Such losses and injuries are occasioned by delay; and where the soul is saved, and sin is pardoned, in how many instances are late converts 'made to possess the iniquities of their youth!"—This brings us,

Part II. To consider the beneficial influence of early piety over the remainder of your days. Youth is the spring of life: and by this will be determined the glory of summer, the abundance of autumn, the provision of winter. It is the morning of life, and if the Sun of Righteousness do not dispel the moral mists and fogs before noon, the whole day generally remains overspread and gloomy. It is the seed-time; and "what a man soweth, that shall he also reap." Every thing of importance is affected by religion in this period of life.

Piety in youth will have a good influence over your bodies.—It will preserve them from disease and deformity. Sin variously tends to the injury of health; and often by intemperance the constitution is so impaired, that late religion is unable to restore what early religion would have prevented. The unpleasantness which you see in many faces is more the effect of evil tempers brooding within, while the features are forming and maturing, than of any natural defect. After such disagreeable traits are established, religion comes too late to alter the physiognomy of the countenance; and thus it is obliged, however lovely in itself, to wear through life a face corroded with envy, malignant with revenge, scowling with suspicion and distrust, or haughty with scorn and contempt.

Early piety will have a good influence over your secular concerns. Nothing is so likely to raise a man in the world. It produces a fair character; it procures confidence and esteem; it promotes diligence, frugality, and charity; it attracts the blessing of Heaven, which "maketh rich, and addeth no sorrow with it." For says God, "them that honour me, I will honour." "Honour the Lord with thy substance, and with the first-fruits of all thy increase; so shall thy barns be filled with plenty, and thy presses shall gush out with new wine."—"Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you."

Early piety will have a good influence to secure you from all those dangers to which you are exposed in a season of life the most perilous.—Conceive of a youth entering a world like this, destitute of the presiding, governing care of religion—his passions high, his prudence weak—impatient, rash, confident—without experience—a thousand avenues of seduction opening around him, and a syren voice singing at the entrance of each—pleased with appearances, and embracing them for realities—joined by evil company—ensnared by erroneous publications!—the hazards, my young friends, exceed all the alarm I can give. You may flatter yourselves that your own good sense and moral feelings will secure you; but "he that trusteth in his own heart is a fool." The power of temptation, the force of example, the influence of circumstances, in new and untried situations, are inconceivable; they baffle the clearest conviction and the firmest resolution, and often render us an astonishment to ourselves. "Trust in the Lord with all thine heart, and lean not to thine own understanding: in all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths." Follow him, and "thou shalt walk in thy way safely, and thy foot shall not stumble." His grace, and his providence, will be thy guard and thy conductor. And "wilt thou not from this time cry unto" Him, "My Father, thou art the guide of my youth!"

Early piety will have a beneficial influence in forming your connexions, and establishing your plans for life—You will ask counsel of the Lord, and arrange all your schemes under the superintendency of Scripture, which contains the wisdom of God. Those changes which a person is obliged to make, who becomes religious in manhood, are always very embarrassing. With what difficulty do some good men establish family worship after living, in the view of children and servants, so long in the neglect of it! But this would have been avoided, had they early followed the example of Joshua—"As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord." How hard is it to disentangle ourselves from associates, with whom we have been long familiar, and who have proved a snare to our souls!—but we should never have linked ourselves with them, had we early listened to the voice of truth—"My son, if sinners entice thee, consent thou not." "He that walketh with wise men shall be wise, and a companion of fools shall be destroyed." Some evils are remediless.—Persons have formed alliances which they cannot dissolve: but they did not walk by the rule, "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers." They are now wedded to misery all their days; and repentance, instead of visiting them like a faithful friend, to chide them when they do wrong, and withdraw, is quartered upon them for life.

We may view the influence of youthful

piety as connected with your spiritual progress and pleasure.—In every science, profession, and business, early application is deemed necessary to future excellency. He is not likely to surpass others, who began long after them. As soon as the grand purpose of a man is fixed, he has something always to regulate him, always to engage him; he secures much action, which would otherwise be dispersed and useless; he avails himself of all accidental assistance, and turns every stream into this swelling channel. An early dedication also renders a religious life more easy and pleasant. Use facilitates: a repetition of action produces habits; and habits formed, yield delight in those exercises which formed them. What was irksome at first becomes by custom agreeable, and we even refuse a change. And this is peculiarly the case here: for religion will bear examination; it improves on intimacy; fresh excellences are perpetually discovered; fresh succours are daily afforded; and every new victory inspires new hope, and produces new energy.

Your piety, my young friends, will be of unspeakable advantage in the calamities of life. These you cannot reasonably expect to escape. "Man is born to trouble." Whatever affords us pleasure, has power to give us pain. Possessions are precarious. Friends die.—When his gourds wither, what becomes of the wretch who has no other shade?—But "to the upright there ariseth light in the darkness." Though Divine grace does not ensure exemption from calamity, it turns the curse into a blessing: it enters the house of mourning, and soothes the troubled mind: it prepares us for all, sustains us in all, sanctifies us by all, delivers us from all.

Early piety will bless old age.—When the "evil days come, and the years draw near, in which you will say, we have no pleasure"—when "the clouds return after the rain"—when "those that look out of the windows are darkened"—when "the grasshopper is a burden, and desire fails," and you are approaching your "long home"—you will not be destitute of consolation. Your "hoary hairs are a crown of glory," for "they are found in the way of righteousness." You enjoy the esteem and assistance of those who have witnessed your worth, and have been blessed by your example. God views you as an "old disciple," and "remembers the kindness of your youth." With humble confidence you may address Him—"O God! thou hast taught me from my youth; and hitherto have I declared thy wondrous works: now also, when I am old and grey-headed, O God, forsake me not." And what saith the answer of God? "Even to your old age I am he, and even to hoary hairs will I carry you: I have made, and I will bear; even I will carry, and will deliver you." You can look back with pleasure on some instances of usefulness: to some poor traveller you have been a refreshing stream; some deluded wanderer you guided into "the path of peace." You review with satisfaction some peculiar places of devotion; some "times of refreshing from the presence of the Lord;" some "holy days" in which, "with the voice of joy and gladness," you accompanied "the multitude to his house." You look forward, and see the God who has guided you "with his counsel," ready to "receive you to glory."—"My salvation is nearer than when I believed: the night is far spent, the day is at hand. I know that my Redeemer liveth. I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand: I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day; and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing."—Such is the beneficial influence of early piety. It affects our bodies, our circumstances, our preservation, our connexions, our progress and pleasure in the ways of godliness, the troubles of life, and the burdens of age.—But if all these advantages do not allure you to an immediate attention to religion, and you resolve to suspend your concern till a future period, it will be necessary,

Part III. To take a more awful view of the subject, and to examine the consequences of procrastination.—We can only make two suppositions. The one is, that after all your delay you will obtain repentance. The other, and which is much more probable, is, that you will not.

First, we shall conclude that you will obtain repentance.—This is what you hope for; but allowing your hope to be well-founded, nothing can be more unreasonable than your delay. For would you indulge yourselves in a course of sin, because you hope to be able hereafter to repent of it? Can any thing exceed this extravagance of folly? Would any man in his senses continue in a business, because he hoped that at last it would fill him with painful regret and self-abhorrence; because he hoped before his death to condemn himself for engaging in it, as having acted a part the most foolish, base, and injurious?—Real repentance is always an awful thing: it leads the subject of it to feel that his "iniquities are a burden too heavy for him to bear;" it causes him to "loath himself for all" his "abominations;" it fills him with "shame, and confusion of face;" it renders him "speechless." This it does at all times. But in a late repentance, in a repentance after so many criminal delays, there are four peculiar circumstances of aggravation. The first is drawn from your singular abuse of the Divine goodness. For what encourages you to refuse so long the obedience which God de-

mands?—You hope he will at last shew mercy: were it not for this confidence, you could not venture to delay. What then, when you go to God, will be the language of your negligence? "Lord, I have been evil, because thou wast good! It was not because I considered thee a hard master, that I did not serve thee, but because I believed thee to be a kind one. Persuaded of thy compassion, and readiness to pardon, I have peaceably sinned against thee for sixty years. If thou hadst not been so infinitely worthy of my affection and devotion, I had long ago loved and obeyed thee."—A second arises from the multitude of evil to be reviewed. It is distressing enough to examine a week, or a month, stained with the vileness of sin. But, oh! to look back upon years! multiplied years! to see sins rushing out of every relation, every condition in which we have been found!—So many opportunities lost! so many talents misemployed! so many privileges abused! a life barren of goodness! a whole life of guilt!—A third is taken from injury done to others. If God has forgiven him, how can he forgive himself! By his errors, his vices, his example, and his influence, he has led others into sins, from which he cannot reclaim them: he sees them advancing in the way of destruction, and knows that he instructed and encouraged them to enter it. Happy is the youth, who, by an early conversion, is preserved from being a "corrupter," and who is harmless, if not "useful in his passage through life."—To charge ourselves with the loss of one soul, is sufficient, not only to embitter repentance, but, if it were possible, to produce even anguish in heaven.—The fourth is to be found in the uncertainty which necessarily attends such deferred repentance. For how can he be assured of the truth of it? How can he know that he has not only abandoned sin, but is mortified to it? How can he know that he is not only reformed, but renewed? Principles are to be ascertained by their operations and effects; but what opportunity has he to exemplify them? How can he know that his concern is any thing more than fear awakened, or tears extorted, by the approach of death and judgment? Men may change their work, and not their master. We have seen men in circumstances of sickness, giving all the evidence we could desire of a genuine repentance, whose health and whose wickedness returned together. How will you decide whether your repentance be superior to this? What reason will you have for cruel suspicion! How dreadful to be in a state of perplexity, when, above all things, you need a good hope through grace!—To suspend salvation on a venture!—Perhaps, I am on the confines of heaven; perhaps, I am on the verge of hell!—

Our reasoning has thus far proceeded on a supposition that you will obtain repentance hereafter, though you are resolved to live neglectful of God now. But there is another supposition—you may not obtain it; and this, we contend, is much more probable than the former.—For who has told you that you shall live to repent? Have you made a covenant with death! Are you secure from the jeopardy of diseases and accidents? You expect the Master in the evening—who assures you that he will not come in the morning? Stand forth, ye young and ye healthy—did you never hear of one dying at your age, and in your circumstances? A wise writer has told you that "Sixteen is mortal as fourscore;" and an inspired one, "Man also knoweth not his time. As the fishes that are taken in an evil net, and as the birds that are caught in the snare, so are the sons of men snared in an evil time, when it falleth suddenly upon them."

Or who has assured you that you shall have grace to repent? For to grace only can you look for the effect; and this grace must be little less than miraculous.—View a man who has reached the period of your procrastination. His strength is labour and sorrow—the infirmities of the body weigh down the soul—the senses are impaired—the faculties are benumbed—he is incapable of attention—every trifle disconcerts him—he is more than half dead before he begins to think of living—he is preparing to "run the race set before him" when he is unable any longer to breathe. Conscience calling so long in vain, is now silent. Objects so long familiar to the mind, are become unimpressive. He has passed by threatenings so often, that they cease to terrify him. The present Bible has done nothing, and no new one is to be expected. He has not been led to repentance by "Moses and the prophets, neither would he be persuaded though one rose from the dead."—"It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for" an old sinner "to enter into the kingdom of heaven:"—"with men it is impossible; but with God all things are possible"—On this hinge turns his hope—all is reduced to this—the repentance of such a man MUST depend upon grace.—Let us see then what reason you have to conclude that God will grant you this repentance. God waits to be gracious; and of this grace we cannot speak too highly: but such views of it as encourage presumption and countenance sin are unquestionably erroneous ones. He is gracious—but his grace lives in communion with his holiness and his wisdom. He is gracious—but the very notion supposes the exercise of it to be free, and that he may dispense it as he pleases. Though nothing can deserve his goodness, many things may provoke it: and what reason have you to expect, that after you can sin no longer, he will in an extraordinary way extend the grace you have so long despised, and save you from a ruin the consequence of your own choice? And what view have you of God, if you suppose that he can-

not righteously deny it? When you have rendered yourselves most unworthy of it as a gift, do you exact it as a right? Has he not told you that his "Spirit shall not always strive with men?" Is his mercy to have no limits, or his patience no end? If "sentence against an evil work be not executed speedily," is it never to be executed? Were it common for God to call sinners by his grace at such a period, would it not have the most unfavourable effect, and encourage a hope which all the Bible is levelled to destroy? God designs to be honoured by his people in THIS world. He saves them—that they may serve him: he converts them—not to die, but to live. And therefore we find few, very few, becoming religious in advanced years: and observation abundantly proves that irreligious youth is almost constantly followed with wickedness in manhood, and indifference in old age; and that as men live, so they die.

Ah! how often do I think, as I ascend these stairs, and look round on this assembly, how easy would it be to determine my hearers to a religious course, if the old did not fatally promise themselves weeks; the middle-aged, months; and the young, years to come! It is not absolute denial that destroys so many souls, but tampering delay. Of all the numbers who continually drop into perdition, is there one, who did not intend at some future period to "work out his salvation?"—But before this other passion was fully indulged, and this other scheme was accomplished, while he was slumbering in negligence, or awaked by a midnight cry, he sprang up to find his lamp; —the "Bridegroom came, and they that were READY went in with him to the marriage, and the door was SHUT." Eternal God! "so teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom." Interpose in favour of the youth who are before Thee; and suffer not procrastination, that "thief of time," that "child of the devil," to deceive and to destroy the rising hopes of our families, our churches, and our country. "Pour down thy Spirit upon our seed, and thy blessing upon our offspring."—"May one say, I am the Lord's; and another call himself by the name of Jacob; and another subscribe with his own hand, and surname himself by the name of Israel."

To realize this pleasing prospect, let ministers, let tutors, let all unite their endeavours. But, O ye PARENTS, a peculiar obligation devolves upon you. Awaken all your tenderness and anxiety, and give them a spiritual direction. You wish your children to be sober, submissive, dutiful—but piety is the only sure foundation of morality. You would not have your love for your children to be suspected—but wretched are those children who share only in a solicitude, which asks, 'what shall they eat, or what shall they drink, or wherewithal shall they be clothed?" —What is the body to the soul? What is time to eternity? What is it to dispose of them advantageously in life, and leave them unprepared for death, unprovided for a new, a never-ending, period of existence? Are you the barbarous instruments of bringing these hapless beings into life, only to sacrifice them?—Such parents are more cruel than Herod. He slew the children of others—these slay their own. He only destroyed the body—these destroy the soul. His victims died innocent, and were doubtless saved—these parents will not suffer their offspring to die innocent: by their unkind care, they guard them till the season of safety is elapsed; till they are become accountable, and criminal; and expose them, when they know their death will be attended with their damnation. Men and brethren, escape this dreadful censure—distinguish yourselves not only from an openly wicked world, but from those modern professors of religion, who are always found in public, hearing sermons, but can leave their families in disorder, and take no pains in the pious education of their children.—Fear God yourselves, and teach your offspring to fear him. Recommend instruction by example, and crown all with prayer—prayer for them, and with them. Thus you will "train them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord;" thus you will rejoice here "to see them walking in the truth," and hereafter will lead them to the Throne of Glory; saying, "Behold, here am I, and the children thou hast given me."

But it is with you, my hearers in early life, I wish to close this address.—I see some in this assembly who are distinguished by the fear of God in their youth:—some Isaacs, who prefer an evening-walk in the field, to meditate, to the crowded avenues of dissipation:—some Josephs, whose image is "a fruitful bough by a well:"—some Davids, who love the harps of Zion, and have no ear for "the song of the drunkard," or "the mirth of fools:" —some Timothies, who "from children have known the Scripture, which is able to make them wise unto salvation:"—and I hail you on your early escape from "the paths of the destroyer," on your early separation from a world, which attracts only to shew its emptiness, and elevates only to depress; on your early union with the wise and good. Go forth, and in all "the beauties of holiness" honour God, and serve your generation according to his will. Religiously occupy the stations which you are to ennoble, and form the connexions which you are to bless. "Adorn the doctrine of God your Saviour in all things." Earnestly pursue the glorious course which you have begun; be not weary in well-doing; grow in grace, as you advance in years, "abound more and more in knowledge, and in

all judgment;" "approve things that are excellent;" and "be sincere and without offence till the day of Christ."

And what hinders any of you, my young friends, from joining yourselves to the Lord?—Weigh the reasonings which you have heard. Suspend for a while the influence of your passions, and endeavour to feel the force of the motives which have been adduced. Deliberate, or rather decide; for there is no time for hesitation—"now is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation." The language of the Redeemer is, "To-day;" and will you say, with Pharaoh, "To-morrow?" Every delay will leave you more remote from the God you have to seek—every delay will place more barriers between you and heaven—every delay will increase your crimes, your passions, your aversions—every day will diminish the efficacy of means, the period of Divine patience, the time of your probation. While you hesitate, you die; while you promise yourselves years, perhaps you have not days—perhaps the shuttle has passed the loom that wove thy winding-sheet—perhaps in yonder shop lies rolled up, and ready to be severed off, the piece of cloth destined to be thy shroud; perhaps "the feet of them that have buried thy" companion, are at the door, "to carry thee out!"

When Felix trembled, instead of cherishing his concern, he proposed a "more convenient season," which—never came. It was the unhappy state of Agrippa to be "almost, but not altogether persuaded to be a Christian."—And there are young people—how shall I described them?—they had betimes convictions and impressions—their early days were the time of their visitation—they asked for God their Maker; they often retired to pray; they loved the Sabbath; they heard the Gospel with sensibility—but, alas! "their goodness was as a morning cloud and early dew, which passeth away."—But "was it not better with you then than now?"—Ah! had you still "hearkened to His commandments, then had your peace been as a river, and your righteousness like the waves of the sea."—Will this discourse revive your former feelings, and cause you to return? Or will it only hold you up as a warning, to guard others against trifling with conscience, and falling away after the same example!

On some of you, I fear, the address has been more than useless.—I could wish you had saved yourselves the mortification of hearing a discourse, in which there was nothing agreeable to your taste, and which you determined from the beginning to disregard; I could wish you had withdrawn yourselves from an assembly, which will one day furnish only witnesses against you.—By an unsanctified use of the means of grace, you aggravate your sin, you increase your misery, and you render your conversion more difficult. In endeavouring to be your friends, your ministers become your enemies; in trying to save, they condemn: though ordained to be "the savour of life unto life," your corruption renders them "the savour of death unto death;" and those affectionate importunities and faithful warnings, which if they had been regarded would have secured your happiness, will surround your minds when you come to die, and render your recollection painful, and your prospect intolerable—For you will "mourn at the last, when thy flesh and thy body are consumed, and say, How have I hated instruction, and my heart despised reproof; and have not obeyed the voice of my teachers, nor inclined mine ear to them that instructed me! I was almost in all evil in the midst of the congregation and assembly."

SERMON VII.

THE CONDEMNATION OF SELF-WILL.

Should it be according to thy mind?
Job xxxiv. 33.

"O THAT I were made judge in the land; that every man which hath any suit or cause might come unto me, and I would do him justice!" Such was the language of Absalom, when labouring to promote and to justify a measure, the design of which was to exclude David from the throne, and to establish a usurper. It is the common eloquence of faction, which always knows how much easier it is to censure than to reform; which loves to talk of the facility of government, and to hide the difficulties; which is sure to fix on evils that are often unavoidable, and to disregard advantages, in the procuring of which human prudence has some share; and which is ever making comparisons between long established institutions, the sober value of which cannot strike with the freshness of novelty, and the charming scenes to be found in the paradise of speculation.

Who is not ready to condemn Absalom?—"Young man, while the king is employed in the cares and perplexities of empire, it is an easy thing for you to sit in the gate, and deal forth your reflections and your promises. Are you not a subject? Are you not a son? Are you not, in experience, and every other qualification, inferior to your father and your sovereign?"

I go further—If a person were to rise up in this assembly, and endeavour to draw away disciples after him; if, holding the same language with regard to God which Absalom used with regard to David, he should say, "O that I were made governor in the world! Things should not be as they now are. The ways of the Lord are not equal: the Almighty perverts judgment"—I am persuaded you would be ready to drive him from the sanc-

tuary, and to stone him with stones, saying, "Thou child of the devil, thou enemy of all righteousness, when wilt thou cease to pervert the right ways of God?"—But what, my hearers, if there should be found here, of such a description, not one character only, but many! what if, in condemning this supposed blasphemer, you have pronounced judgment on yourselves?—Why, the sentiment, in various degrees, prevails in all mankind. If they do not avow it, they indulge it; if they do not express it in words, it is to be derived by fair inference from their actions. For are they not displeased with the Divine proceedings? Do they not murmur at those events which, under His administration, are perpetually occurring? Are they not always suggesting arrangements which they deem preferable to those which the Governor of the world has planned?

This is the subject which is to engage your attention at this hour: and it is a subject of superior importance, and will be found to possess a commanding influence over your duty and your happiness. Observe the words which we have read as the foundation of this exercise—"Should it be according to thy mind?"—The speaker is Elihu; a personage which the sacred historian introduces in a manner so extraordinary, that commentators know not what to make of him. Some have taken him for the Son of God; others, for a prophet; all, for a wise and good man. The meaning of the question is obvious—"Shall the Supreme Being do nothing without thy consent? Should he ask counsel of thee? Ought he to regulate his dispensations according to thy views and desires?—Should it be according to thy mind?" He does not specify any particular case; which makes the inquiry the more striking and useful, and justifies an application of it the most general and comprehensive. Elihu, like the other friends of Job, said some things harsh, and improper; but when he asked, "Should it be according to thy mind?" Job should instantly have answered, No. And were your preacher to address the same question individually to this assembly, you should all immediately answer, No. To bring you to this temper, we shall enlarge on the desire of having things "according to our mind." I. As COMMON. II. As UNREASONABLE. III. As CRIMINAL. IV. As DANGEROUS. V. As IMPRACTICABLE.—"Consider what I say, and the Lord give you understanding in all things."

I. To have things "according to our mind" is a very COMMON wish.—Man is naturally self-willed. The disposition appears very early in our children. All sin is a contention against the will of God. It began in paradise. Adam disobeyed the prohibition to "touch of the tree of knowledge of good and evil," and all his posterity have, unhappily, followed his example. What God forbids, we desire and pursue; what he enjoins, we dislike and oppose. Yea, "the carnal mind is enmity against God: it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be."

Enter the world of grace. Behold the revelation which God has given us—One deems it unnecessary—for a second, it is too simple—for a third, it is too mysterious. See Jesus Christ crucified—He is "to the Jews a stumbling block, and to the Greeks foolishness." God has "set" his "King upon his holy hill of Zion," and has sworn "that to him every knee shall bow, and every tongue confess"—the language of those who hear this determination is, "We will not have this man to reign over us." When we begin to think of returning to God, it is not by the way which "He has consecrated for us," but by a way of our own devising. We labour, not despairing of our own strength, while prophets and apostles teach us to implore help, and to place all our dependence on Him, whose "grace" alone "is sufficient" for us. We seek to be justified by our own works, while the Gospel assures us we must be justified by "the faith of Christ"—and many a proud Naaman exclaims, "Are not Abana and Pharpar, rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel? may I not wash in them, and be clean?" So he turns and goes away in "a rage."

And the same is to be seen in the world of Providence. Who is "content with such things as" he has? Who does not covet what is denied him? Who does not envy the superior condition of his neighbour? Who does not long to be at his own disposal? If he draw off his eyes from others, and look inwardly, every man will find a "Pope in his own bosom"—he would have every thing according to his own mind—he would have his own mind the measure of all he does towards God, and of all God does towards him.

Acknowledged—But is not this disposition crushed in conversion, and are not the Lord's "people made willing in the day of his power?"—See Saul of Tarsus on his knees: "Behold, he prayeth"—"Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" David wraps himself up in the stillness of patience and submission: "I was dumb; I opened not my mouth; because thou didst it." There stands old Eli: he has received the most distressing intelligence, and piously exclaims, "It is the Lord; let Him do what seemeth him good." A gracious woman in deep affliction was once heard to say, "I mourn, but I do not murmur." We have read of one, who, when informed that her two sons, her only children, were drowned, said, in all the majesty of grief, and with an heavenly composure, "I see God is resolved to have all my heart, and I am resolved He SHALL have it."—Ah! here you behold the saints in their choicest moments, and in their best frames—for their sanctification is im-

perfect in all its parts—too much of the self-will remains even in them—they are most gratified when they find the Divine proceedings falling into the direction which they had prescribed—they are too much elated when their schemes succeed, and too much depressed when their hopes are frustrated. They do indeed love the will of God; and we are far from saying, that they would have nothing done according to HIS mind; but they are often solicitous to have too many things done according to their OWN.

II. The desire is UNREASONABLE. This will easily appear—for we are wholly unqualified to govern; while God is every way adequate to the work in which he is engaged. Therefore nothing can be more absurd than to labour to displease him, and substitue ourselves as the creators of destiny, the regulators of events. For, to throw open this thought —his power is almighty; his resources are boundless: "his understanding is infinite." He sees all things, in their origin, in their connexions, in their dependences, in their remote effects. He is "wonderful in counsel, and excellent in working." This is the Being you wish to set aside—and who is to be his successor in empire? You, a worm of the earth; you, whose "foundation is in the dust;" you, who are "crushed before the moth;" you, who are of "yesterday, and know nothing;" you, who "know not what a day may bring forth."

Placed in an obscure corner of the universe, where only a small proportion of God's works passes under his review; fixed in a valley, whose surrounding hills intercept his prospects: a prisoner even there, looking only through grates and bars; his very dungeon enveloped in mists and fogs; his eyes also dim by reason of weakness—such is man!—and this "vain man would be wise;" this is the candidate, who deems himself, by his proposal, capable of governing, and wishes to arrange things according to HIS mind.

My brethren, have you not often found yourselves mistaken, where you thought yourselves most sure? Have you not frequently erred in judging yourselves, and generally erred in judging others? Do you not blame those who condemn any of your proceedings before they understand them, especially when the objects on which they decide fall not within the sphere of their knowledge or observation? What would you think of a subject, who, scarcely competent to guide the petty concerns of his own household, would rush forth to assume the direction of the affairs of an enlarged empire, after censuring measures which he does not comprehend, cannot comprehend; whose labyrinths he cannot trace, whose extensive bearings he cannot reach, whose distant consequences he cannot calculate?—All this imagery is weak when applied to "the man who striveth with his Maker," and "asks, what dost Thou?" For whatever differences subsist between man and man, all are partakers of the same nature, and all are liable to err—But "in God there is no darkness at all."—"Is there unrighteousness with God? God forbid: how then could God judge the world?"

If we know not the peculiarities of the disease, how can we judge properly of the remedy which the physician prescribes? If we know not the station which the son is destined to occupy, how can we judge of the wisdom of the father in the education he is giving him? And how can we decide on the means which the Supreme Being employs, while we are ignorant of the reasons which move him, and the plan which he holds in view?—A providence occurs; it strikes us; we endeavour to explain it—but are we certain that we have seized the true meaning? Perhaps what we take as an end, may be only the way; what we take as the whole, may be only a part; what we deprecate may be a blessing, and what we implore may be a curse; what appears confusion, may be the tendencies of order; and what looks like the disaster of Providence, may be the preparation of its triumph. "Canst thou, by searching, find out God? canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection? Such knowledge is too wonderful for us: it is high; we cannot attain unto it.—O the depths of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways are past finding out! For who hath known the mind of the Lord, or who hath been his counsellor?"—Do not misunderstand the inference we would draw from these premises —There is nothing shameful in the limitation of our powers, nor should we be miserable because we possess only a degree of intelligence: but let us not forget our ignorance; let us not "darken counsel, by words without knowledge;" let us not summon to our tribunal "the only wise God," and condemn all that accords not with our contracted notions. Before we begin to reform, let us be satisfied an amendment is necessary; and before we censure, let us understand.

III. The desire of having things "according to our mind" is CRIMINAL—The sources are bad. "Men do not gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles."

It argues ingratitude.—It is infinite condescension in God to be "mindful of us;" to be willing to manage our concerns; and to allow us to cast all our care upon him, with an assurance that "he careth for us," and will make "all things work together for our good." For all this he surely deserves our thankful acknowledgments—and we insult him with murmuring complaints? What can be more vile, than for a poor dependent creature, who holds his very being by the good pleasure of his Maker, and possesses nothing underived

from the bounty of his Benefactor, to overlook so many expressions of his goodness, because he complies not with every fond desire! What can be baser than our repining, when the very same kindness which urges Providence to give, determines it also to refuse!

It springs from discontent.—It shews that we are displeased with his dealings; for if we were not dissatisfied, why do we desire a change? This was the sin of the Israelites in wishing a king. It did not consist in desiring a monarchy: they would have sinned equally in demanding any other form of government. But they were under the immediate empire of God: He had not pleased them; they would set him right; they "charged him foolishly;" they would be like "the rest of the nations," when it was his pleasure that they should be a peculiar people—"The people shall dwell alone, and shall not be reckoned among the nations."

It betrays earthly-mindedness.—The soul feels it when "cleaving to the dust." According to our attachments, will be, all through life, our afflictions and our perplexities. When you find yourselves in prosperous circumstances, surrounded with affluence and friends, enjoying health and peace, the providence of God is not only agreeable, but intelligible. We never hear you exclaim, as you "join house to house, and add field to field," "Oh, how mysterious the dealings of God are!" But when the scene is reversed—then, not only hard thoughts of God are entertained, but all is embarrassment; "His way is in the sea, and his path in the deep waters, and his footsteps are not known." What! does not God still continue to govern? Has he less wisdom in a cloudy day than in a fine one? Does every dispensation of Providence become intricate as soon as it affects you? Are you so innocent as to render it doubtful whether you can be lawfully touched? Are you such attentive scholars as to render a stroke of the rod a mystery? Is God, in blessing his people, confined to one class of means only? Do not "these light afflictions, which are but for a moment, work out for you a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory?"—So much more attached are we to our fleshly interests than to our spiritual concerns; so much more are we influenced by "things seen and temporal, than by those things which are unseen and eternal."

It is the produce of impatience.—This will suffer no delay. It can bear no denial. It struggles to be free from all controul, and cries, "Let us break" his "bands asunder, and cast away" these "cords from us."

It is the offspring of pride and independence—the cursed disposition which expelled angels from heaven, and Adam from paradise. In a word, it is a presumptuous invasion of the authority and prerogative of God. Your place is the footstool, not the throne: you are to follow, not to lead; to obey, not to dictate. Suppose a stranger, or a neighbour, should come into your family, and begin to new-place the ornaments and utensils of your rooms; to order your children, to command your servants, to rule your house—on what principle would you blame him? This is not his office; this is not his province; he is an intruder.—Maintain your distance here, and do not encroach on the Divine rights. You did not create the universe; it does not depend on your care: the world is not yours, nor the fulness thereof—no, nor even yourselves: YE are not your own—but there is One to whom the whole belongs; "He is Lord of all." God cannot have an equal, and he will not have a rival. A prince may be pleased, if his subjects endeavour to imitate him in his mercy, his goodness, his truth, or in any of those virtues which are common to persons in all situations—hereby they honour him—but if they imitate him in his regalia—in those attributes and actions which are peculiar to him as a king; if, like him, they aspire to wear a crown, to enact laws, to declare peace and war, to levy contributions, to new-model the state; they are guilty of high treason.

IV. The desire of having things "according to our mind" is dangerous—If it were accomplished, all parties would suffer—God—our fellow-creatures—and ourselves.

First, the honour of God would suffer.—Nothing NOW occurs by chance; every thing falls under the regulation of Divine Providence; and as affairs are NOW managed, they all subserve the purpose of Heaven, they all advance the glory of God; even "the wrath of man praises him, and the remainder of it he restrains." Would this be the sure result, if YOU had the direction of the whole? Would YOU make the honour of God invariably your guide? Would you bend every claim and every occurrence to this sublime end? You may imagine you would—and nothing is more common than to hear people making costly promises, the execution of which only requires enlarged opportunities and capacities—But "the heart is deceitful above all things." No man has reason to conclude that he would glorify God with greater powers, who does not employ for him the abilities which he already possesses. We may see this exemplified with regard to property. Many professors of religion whose wealth has increased, do less in proportion, and I fear in some cases less in fact, for the cause of God, than while in more limited circumstances, and when their prospects were not flattering enough to render it worth while for them to become covetous.

Secondly, The welfare of our fellow-creatures would suffer.—The principle of selfishness is common to depraved nature. For who loves his neighbour as himself? Who, in forming his plans, would consider the conven-

iences and advantages of others, as well as his own? The traveller would have the weather to accommodate his journey, regardless of the parched fields of the husbandman. That enemy would be disappointed and crushed. That favourite would be indulged to ruin. Selfish individuality would every where predominate, and public utility would be sacrificed on the altar of private interest.

To come nearer—Your own happiness would, thirdly, suffer; and you would prove the greatest enemies to yourselves.—You would be too eager to choose well: you would not have firmness to refuse a present gratification for the sake of a future good. You would be too carnal to choose well: nature would speak before grace; the pleasing would be preferred to the profitable; imaginary wants would be more numerous than real ones. The Israelites were clamorous for "flesh;" but it was not to relieve their necessities: "they asked meat for their lusts;" and "He gave them their hearts' desire, but sent leanness into their souls." As, in nature, the most beautiful plants are not always the most wholesome or innocent, so it is in human life: a thing is not beneficial because it is gratifying, or good because our passions and appetites may pronounce it so. "Lot lifted up his eyes, and beheld all the plain of Jordan, that it was well watered every where. Then Lot chose him all the plain of Jordan." It was a sensual choice; faith had no influence in this determination: it was made, regardless of the welfare of his soul, the salvation of his family, and the honour of religion. And in what embarrassments, dangers, and calamities, did this preference involve him! The next time we hear of him, he is taken captive by the five kings—then "his righteous soul is vexed daily by the filthy conversation of the ungodly"—then he is burned out, with the loss of all his substance—some of his relations perish in the overthrow—his wife, attached to the place, looks back, and becomes a pillar of salt—his two daughters, made shameless by the manners of the inhabitants, render their father incestuous—and his "grey hairs are brought down with sorrow to the grave."

In a word, you would be too ignorant to choose well. Did you ever observe the question of the inspired preacher—"Who knoweth what is good for man in this life; all the days of this vain life, which he spendeth as a shadow?" The answer is, No one knows.—Look around you, and you will see men eager to change their conditions, but proving, by their behaviour in the new stations they occupy, that they are no nearer satisfaction than before. They rush forth, assured of finding a paradise, but thorns and briers soon convince them that they are entangled in a wilderness. The man of business and the man of leisure envy each other; they exchange, and go on complaining. The poor imagine that wealth would free them from care: they obtain it; but "in the fulness of their sufficiency they are in straits." The retired long for stations of eminence; but beside the trouble and danger of climbing the steep ascent of honour, they are compelled to leave their enjoyments in the vale below; often from the brow of the hill surveying them; often desiring them—but they cannot get down again.

In order to determine what will promote our happiness, it is necessary for us to know the things themselves from among which we are to make our choice: how far it is in their power to yield pleasure; whether their natural tendency may not be counteracted; what are their ordinary effects. Nor is it less needful to understand ourselves. For a man must be adapted to his condition, or he will never be happy in it: that which suits another, may not suit me; what may wear easy on him, may be an incumbrance to me. Now to know whether a condition would accord with us, and be to our advantage, we must know ourselves better than we do: our strength and our weakness; our natural peculiarities and our acquired propensities; our intellectual abilities and our moral qualifications. And here another difficulty occurs. It is impossible for us to judge of ourselves in untried connexions and situations: and the reason is obvious. We go forward to these scenes in imagination only, with our PRESENT sentiments and inclinations, not remembering that our characters are formed and unfolded by circumstances—that we change with events—that the friction of new objects elicits new feelings, quickens dormant guilt, and calls forth improbable corruption. The water is clear till the muddy sediment is disturbed. In private life, Hazael abhorred the thought of inhumanity. When the man of God viewed him with tears, and predicted the cruelties of his future reign, he was filled with horror, and exclaimed, "Is thy servant a dog, that he should do this thing?" But he went forward—arrived at the foot of the throne—exchanged the man for the tyrant—and became the monster which he had execrated.

We are not only liable to err on the side of our hopes, but also of our fears. What in distant prospect filled us with anxiety and dread, as it approached more near, was found the beginning of a train of friends and blessings, all hastening along to do us good. Had Joseph remained under the wing of his fond father, he would have lived and died an insignificant individual; but from the pit and the prison he steps into the second chariot of Egypt, and becomes the saviour of surrounding countries.—Ah! if things had been arranged according to your mind, what afflictions would some of you have escaped, and what benefits would you have lost! For

though no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous, nevertheless afterward it "yieldeth the peaceable fruits of righteousness to them that are exercised thereby." And should we not principally value that which is MORALLY good for us; that which influences and secures our eternal welfare; that by which the safety of the soul is least endangered, and the sanctification of the soul is most promoted? Upon this principle, I am persuaded, many of you are ready to add your testimony to the confessions of former sufferers, and to say, "It is good for me that I have been afflicted." "Disease," says one, "commissioned from above, sought me out, found me in a crowd, detached me from the multitude, led me into a chamber of solitude, stretched me upon a bed of languishing, and drew up eternity close to my view—I never prayed before."—Says another, "My life was bound up in a beloved relation: I saw my gourd smitten, and beginning to wither; I trembled; I watched the process of a danger which doomed all my happiness to the grave—in that moment of bereavement, the world, which had enamoured, was deprived of all its attractions; I broke from the arms of sympathising friends, saying, Where is God my Maker, that giveth songs in the night? I entered my closet, and said, Now, Lord, what wait I for? My hope is in thee."—"Into what miseries," says a third, "should I have fallen, if He had given me up in such an enterprize to my own counsel! I should have advanced till I had fallen from a dangerous precipice, if He had not hedged up my way with thorns: at first, I murmured at the check; but when I looked over, and saw the abyss, I kneeled, and said, Lord, I am thine; save me, in every future peril."—Thus, by experience, He has been convincing you, that "the way of man is not in himself," and that "it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps;" and having seen the hazards to which you would be exposed in managing for yourselves, you are now on your knees, saying, "He shall choose our inheritance for us. Surely I have behaved and quieted myself as a child that is weaned from his mother: my soul is even as a weaned child."

We have one more view to take of the subject. The desire of having things "according to our mind," is IMPRACTICABLE.

Observe only two things. First, the desires of mankind, in ten thousand instances, are opposite to each other—hence they cannot be all accomplished. Secondly, the plan of Divine government is already fixed—the machine is in motion—it is rolling by, and we can neither arrest its progress, nor give it a new direction. "He is in one mind, and who can turn Him? and what his soul desireth, even that He doeth; for He performeth the thing that is appointed for me: and many such things are with him. Our God is in the heavens; he hath done whatsoever he pleased: declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure." How useless therefore is your anxiety! "Which of you, by taking thought, can add one cubit to his stature?" You may repine; but you fret and rage in vain. God will not yield up the reins into your hands. "He teareth himself in his anger: shall the earth be forsaken for thee? and shall the rock be removed out of his place?" "Should it be according to thy mind? He will recompense it, whether thou refuse, or whether thou choose."—Having established a general principle, it will be necessary to make such an application as will preclude the abuse of it, and render it useful to promote resignation, to encourage our faith, to animate our hope.

First, Let not the conscientious Christian suppose himself guilty of the disposition we censure, when he only indulges allowed desire. You may ask of God any temporal blessing conditionally, and with submission to the pleasure of the Almighty. Are you in trouble? Afflictions are not immutable dispensations; and your praying for their removal will not be striving with Providence, if you are willing to refer the case ultimately to the determination of Infinite Wisdom and Goodness, and to acquiesce in the decision. Thus did our Saviour; "Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt." To offer a humble petition differs widely from making a demand, or proposing a task. When our desires are rash, unqualified, impetuous, enforcing, they are not only offensive to God, but they injure the soul, and they injure our cause. If, to use the expression, when we insist upon an object, we are gratified, the indulgence is dreadful—it is a curse. Thus God punished the sinful importunity of the Jews: "He gave them a king in his anger, and took him away in his wrath." But if he loves you, in such a case he will be sure to deny you; he will teach you, by his refusal, that he has a right to withhold, and that you have no claims upon the Giver: he will bring you to supplicate what before you seemed to demand. He sees that while you are thus passionately eager, he cannot with safety indulge you with the object, you would make too much of it. He is a God of judgment, and he waits a cooler and more sober frame of mind; when you can receive it properly, and not be so lost in the gift, as to disregard the Giver. The best way for a Christian to gain any temporal good, is to seek after a holy indifference. The moment it ceases to be dangerous, He will be ready to gratify you, for "He taketh pleasure in the prosperity of his servants."

Secondly, The subject preaches submission. It powerfully urges you to leave yourselves to

the disposal of Divine Providence—to lie as clay in the hands of the potter; willing to receive any shape he chooses to give you, or to take any impression he is pleased to impose—to keep your eye towards the fiery cloudy pillar, and to be ready to move as it moves, turn as it turns, pause as it pauses. And is not all this implied in your profession, resolutions, and vows? Do you not remember a time when you gave your God what you had too long withheld from him—your heart? And have you not often since renewed this engagement? Are there no seasons in your experience, no spots in your walks, made sacred in your recollection by fresh dedications of yourselves to Him?—When the will is in unison with the will of God, which is perfect rectitude, it is ennobled. To be like-minded with God, is the highest honour we can ever possess: to surrender ourselves to his pleasure, is the purest act of obedience we can ever perform. It is the essence of holiness, to do what God loves, and to love what God does. And as nothing can be more pious, so nothing can be more wise than such a resignation. If your will corresponds with the will of God, you may be always sure of its accomplishment: "Commit thy works unto the Lord, and thy thoughts shall be established." This is the only way to be happy in a miserable world: on this all your satisfaction depends. He knows what things you have need of, and what will be for your advantage. Depend on Him. Follow Him. Secure His favour: refer all to Him, and leave all with Him. "It is vain for you to rise up early, to sit up late, to eat the bread of sorrows; for so he giveth his beloved sleep." —"Be careful for nothing; but in every thing, by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God—and the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus."

Thirdly, Let the subject inspire you with consolation. Make use of the question to repress all the uneasiness which you would otherwise feel when you contemplate the diversity of human affairs. Remember it when you think of the world, and your imagination is busied in schemes of revolution and reformation. Remember it when you think of the state of the nation, and deplore many things which appear deplorable, and desire many things which appear desirable. Remember it when you think of the condition of the Church; when you ask, "Why such diversities of opinion among its leaders? Why such frequent persecution of its members? Why are they generally so poor and afflicted? Why are they all the day long plagued, and chastened every morning; while their ungodly neighbours abound in affluence and indulgence? Should the sinner live within, clothed in purple and fine linen, and faring sumptuously every day; while the saint lies at his gate, a beggar full of sores?" Remember it, when you think of the circumstances of the family; when, driven in from a troublesome world, and hoping to find an asylum there, you are forced as you enter to sigh, with David, "My house is not so with God." Remember it when you think of your respective cases as individuals: of perplexites and tears; of losses and vexations; of pain of body; of imperfections of mind; of continuance in this world—"Should it be according to thy mind? or according to the purpose of Him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will; and who is wonderful in counsel, and excellent in working?"

Finally, Let all this lead you forward, and draw forth your expectation of another, and a more glorious œconomy. Beyond this vale of tears lies a land flowing with milk and honey. You are now in a state of probation and discipline; but trials and corrections will not be always necessary. The denials and restraints, to which the heir of glory submits while he is a child, cease when he comes of age. You now walk by faith, and not by sight; soon you will walk by sight, and not by faith. What you know not now, you will know hereafter. You will then find yourselves infinitely more happy, by the Divine disposal of all your concerns, than you could have been, had you always enjoyed your own wishes. When, from the top of the holy hill of Zion, you shall look down upon the winding path of Providence, by which you ascended, you will praise Him for the means as well as for the end, admire his wisdom as well as his kindness, and say, "He hath done all things well."

Some of your friends and relations are gone before you. In his light they see light. To them the whole mystery is now explained. Blessed spirits, how we envy you! We see Him through a glass darkly; and half the time cannot spy at Him at all: you see Him face to face; you know even as you are known.—Well, Christians, they are waiting "to receive us into everlasting habitations;" we shall soon join them; we shall soon unite in their acknowledgments and adorations, and this will be our eternal theme: "Marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty! Just and right are all thy ways, O thou King of saints."

SERMON VIII.

THE GOSPEL DEMANDS AND DESERVES ATTENTION.

If any man have ears to hear, let him hear.
Mark iv. 23.

The sages of antiquity delivered much of their knowledge in comprehensive sentences. Each of the wise men of Greece was distinguished by some aphorism. All nations have

had their peculiar proverbs. The generality of mankind are much more influenced by detached and striking phrases, than by long addresses, or laboured reasonings, which require more time and application than they are either willing or able to afford. "The words of the wise are as goads, and as nails fastened by the master of assemblies." The good effects of preaching are commonly produced by particular expressions, which leave something for our own minds to develop or enlarge, which please the imagination, which are easily remembered, and which frequently recur. This method of instruction our Lord and Saviour adopted. We often read of "his sayings;" and there is no sentence which he so frequently repeated, as the words which I have read. —This alone should powerfully recommend them to our regard. But they have higher claims; and we shall view them, I. As implying THE AUTHORITY OF THE SPEAKER. II. As suggesting THE IMPORTANCE OF THE SUBJECT. III. As appealing to IMPARTIAL CONSIDERATION. IV. As demanding PRACTICAL IMPROVEMENT.—"HE THAT HATH EARS TO HEAR, LET HIM HEAR."

I. Here is implied THE AUTHORITY OF THE SPEAKER. And who can advance claims on our attention equally numerous and powerful with his?—"He entered into the synagogue, and taught. And they were astonished at his doctrine; for he taught them as one that HAD AUTHORITY, and not as the Scribes." He possessed every thing from which a teacher could derive influence.

He had all the authority which is derived from knowledge. Religion was the subject he came to teach. He knew the whole, and the whole perfectly. With all the ease of intelligence, he speaks of things which would swallow us up—they were familiar to him. He speaks of God without any embarrassment —"He was in the bosom of the Father." He speaks of heaven without any emotions of wonder—it was his Father's house. He mentions the treachery of Judas without any surprise —"he knew from the beginning who would betray him." Nothing in the behaviour of his enemies, or of his friends; nothing in the denial of Peter, or dispersion of his disciples; astonished him—"he knew what was in man." He was fully acquainted with the capacities and dispositions of his hearers. He knew how much they were able to bear—when it was necessary to produce evidence, or to leave obscurity—how to touch by suitable motives all the hidden springs of action; and, by appropriate illustration, to remove prejudices, dissolve doubts, and satisfy desires concealed in the minds of the owners, who, "finding the secrets of the heart made manifest," were filled with admiration, and exclaimed, "Never man spake like this man!" Both his subject and his audience were completely under his management.

He had all the authority which is derived from unimpeachable rectitude. This gives a speaker peculiar firmness and force. A consciousness of vice, or even of imperfection, has a tendency to make him partial or timid. And where is the teacher who is sensible of no failings? who exemplifies universally those high instructions that he delivers? "In many things we offend all." He alone could say, "Which of you convinceth me of sin?" No evil debased any of his actions, or mixed with any of his motives. His tempers were all heavenly; his example embodied and enlivened every doctrine he preached. In him were none of those omissions which call for the proverb, "Physician, heal thyself." He spake fearless of the reproach of his hearers, and unchecked by the reflections of his own conscience.

He had all the authority flowing from "miracles, and wonders, and signs." Think of a speaker, who could call forth the powers of heaven and earth, and establish his doctrine by their testimony—who could end his discourse, and say—"All this is true. Witness, ye winds and waves"—and they "cease from their raging." "Witness, ye blind"—and they "receive their sight." "Witness, ye dead"—and "Lazarus comes forth."—"Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher sent from God; for no man can do these miracles which thou doest, except God be with him."

Consider his uncontrollable dominion.—There is no place where his voice does not reign. He causes the most insensible creatures to hear it.—In the original creation, "he spake, and it was done; he commanded, and it stood fast. He appointeth the moon for seasons; and the sun knoweth his going down. The day is his; the night also is his: he has made summer and winter:" and when he calls for them, they never refuse to come. Even the unruly sea acquiesces in his mandate—"Hitherto shalt thou come, and no further; and here shall thy proud waves be stayed." The earth obeys the laws which he impressed upon it. "The voice of the Lord is powerful: the voice of the Lord is full of majesty: the voice of the Lord breaketh the cedars: the voice of the Lord divideth the flames of fire: the voice of the Lord shaketh the wilderness. —Marvel not at THIS: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in THEIR GRAVES shall hear his voice, and shall come forth."—Obeyed by all creatures, he approaches you, and expects submission. Would you be the only rebels in the universe? Unlike all other beings, would you swerve from your station and renounce your allegiance? Harder than the rock, and more senseless than the dead, would you refuse to hear his voice?

Consider the dignity of his character.—"Where the word of a king is, there is power; and who may say unto him, what doest thou?" The most magnificent titles are not too glori-

ous to discriminate the Son of God. "He hath on his vesture and on his thigh a Name written—King of kings, and Lord of lords." Was Isaiah mistaken, when he said of the "Child born, and the Son given," "The government shall be upon his shoulder; and his Name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace!" Did he himself exceed his personal claims when he said, "I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending; which is, and which was, and which is to come—the Almighty!"

And does He not stand in relations the most intimate and affecting? He made you—placed you so high in the scale of being—endued your nature with reason and immortality. He sustains you—"In Him you live, and move, and have your being." His are all your possessions; and if there be a day, or an hour, in which he is regardless of you, you shall be allowed, for that day or hour, to be inattentive to Him. His demands are founded, in the sun which shines upon you—in the friends you enjoy—in the bread which nourishes you—and, above all, in the salvation you need. He addresses you from the garden and the cross—and shall his voice be unheard? Shall such an authority be despised? Will you stand with Pharaoh, and impiously ask, "Who is the Lord, that I should obey his voice?"—Why: "He, in whose hands thy breath is, and whose are all thy ways"—He, "who remembered" thee in thy "low estate"—He, "who gave his life a ransom" for thee—He is thy master. And shall servants disobey the orders of a master? Thy teacher—and shall disciples refuse the instructions of their teacher? Thy benefactor—and have loving-kindnesses and tender mercies no claims?—Let us pass from the authority of the Speaker, to consider what is equally included in the address.

II. The IMPORTANCE OF THE SUBJECT—"He that hath ears to hear, let him hear." Sometimes speakers promise their hearers more than they can perform, and excite expectations which they are unable to realize—Jesus Christ is not afraid to awaken attention; he knows that he can more than repay it; he knows we can never raise our minds to the grandeur of the subject.—His instructions are unspeakably interesting and important.

But, in order to this, they must be TRUE. And, my brethren, you cannot but acknowledge, that the reality of these things is POSSIBLE—sometimes it strikes you as PROBABLE, and much more frequently than you are willing to allow: hence your uneasiness; hence your eagerness to bring forward your opinions, to make proselytes, and to embolden your trembling faith by placing numbers around it—We affirm that these things ARE TRUE.—And observe where we stand when we affirm it—within view of evidences, numberless and convincing. There we appeal to a series of prophecies; and here, to a train of miracles. There, to the sublimity and holiness of the doctrine; here, to the competency and goodness of the writers. There, to the success of the Gospel, destitute of every worldly recommendation, and in the face of the most powerful opposition; here, to the blood of the best of men, and the consent of the wisest of men: for we stand not only near the fishermen of Galilee, but a multitude of pre-eminent genius and learning, when we say, "We have not followed cunningly devised fables." With all this evidence, would you dispute the truth of these things? Would you assure us, as some in our day have done, that there is not the shadow of truth in them?—What should we think of the understandings of such persons?—did we not know that they must pretend all this to justify their indifference—that when a man has fallen out with his conscience, he must separate from it, for the sake of his own peace—and that "this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men love darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil."

How pleasing is truth! How satisfactory is it to find something to which the mind may adhere with pleasure, after being the dupe of ignorance and error, and, "like a wave of the sea, driven with the wind and tossed."—But though that which is important must always be true, that which is true is not always important. It is otherwise here—as the Gospel is "a faithful saying," so it is "worthy of all acceptation." Even "the angels desire to look into these things." We no where read of their being naturalists or astronomers; yet they pass by the moon and stars, and press around the cross. And you, my brethren, are much more concerned than angels: I may take up the language of Moses to the Israelites—"Set your hearts unto all the words which I testify among you this day; for it is not a vain thing, because it is YOUR LIFE." To you the Gospel is not a history of wonders only; the journey of a God from a throne down to a cross, and from a cross back to a throne: it is the interesting narrative of your salvation. Take every other kind of wisdom—how humbling its claims! They are confined to this world. "Knowledge—it shall vanish away." The greater part of it is valuable only for a few years. An acquaintance with various languages, and a thousand other things, will be useless in a future œconomy. The inquiry is, "Who has the words of eternal life?" "Who can lead us in the way EVERLASTING?" What is a message which concerns only your property, and the health of your body! The soul is the standard of the man. Your supreme happiness must relate principally to the chief part of your nature, and the chief period of your du-

ration. Now the Gospel fixes its residence in the soul; and there illuminates all, sanctifies all, harmonizes all, and strikes its blessed influences through eternal ages.

Contemplate the Gospel in connexion with youth and with age; observe its efficacy in the various conditions of prosperity and adversity; view its agency in the numerous relations of life—in rulers and in subjects, in parents and in children. Place Christianity in a family; spread it through a nation; diffuse it over the world—let all be influenced by its spirit, and governed by its dictates: and I would ask, appealing to infidels themselves, Would not a scene be produced, the most lovely, the most glorious, the most beneficial? Would not the language of prophecy be immediately realized—"The wilderness and the solitary place shall be made glad for them; and the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose. It shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice even with joy and singing: the glory of Lebanon shall be given unto it, the excellency of Carmel and Sharon: they shall see the GLORY of the Lord, and the EXCELLENCY of our God?" Thus, whether we consider the Gospel with regard to man in his individual or social existence; as an inhabitant of time or an heir of eternity; it is a universal benefactor; and, as it demands, so it deserves all his attention:—"If any man have ears to hear, let him hear."

III. It is an appeal to IMPARTIAL CONSIDERATION. And the demand supposes the subject to be accessible—that there is no secrecy in the case—nothing to be concealed. In heathenism, there were many mysteries, from a knowledge of which, the common people, the mass of mankind, were always excluded.—Error needs disguise; henco we read of men who shall "privily bring in damnable heresies." Truth glories in exposure. And the Gospel has this character of truth. The founder of our religion declared, "In secret have I said nothing." The Apostle of the Gentiles could affirm, "this thing was not done in a corner." These everlasting records lie open for inspection; they challenge examination. It is not necessary to conceal any thing; the cause will derive advantage from publicity; it is a system of truth and evidence: and you are not only allowed, but commanded to consider its claims, and to examine its contents.

The duty our Saviour enjoins excludes force, and supposes every thing to be free. All dominion over conscience is forbidden by it. Mahometanism was enforced by the sword: soldiers were the apostles of the Koran. Popery began and was maintained by means of spritual usurpation. They knew the danger of free inquiry, and shewed their wisdom in not suffering it: they destroyed the right of private judgment, took away the Scriptures, and made ignorance the mother of devotion. The blind must depend upon a guide. And has not too much of this disposition been discovered in succeeding ages, and by persons who have come much nearer the truth? Have they not refused to others a liberty which they had nobly taken themselves? After scorning to be slaves, have they never wished to be tyrants? And though they would not call any man master, have they not desired to be called master? But "one is our Master, even Christ, and all we are brethren." No one has dominion over the faith of another. No coercive influence, however exercised, has the least countenance from the nature of the Gospel, or the manner in which it was established. The Bereans are commended for "searching the Scriptures daily," and comparing the preaching of Paul and Silas with the testimonies of the law and the prophets. Hear the language of a man who well knew there was no virtue in the effects of compulsion—"Prove all things, and hold fast that which is good:" "I speak as unto wise men, judge ye what I say." The Gospel persuades by informing; and even regeneration does not destroy the natural order of operation in the faculties of the mind. God enlightens in order to govern; we follow him from choice: this choice is founded in conviction; and this conviction is produced by evidence.

If you would comply with our Lord's demand, remember, it is the Gospel you have to consider, and nothing else. Separate from it whatever is adventitious and human; and during this investigation, keep the subject before you, pure and unmixed. Be careful that it is Christianity you are surveying—not any corruptions and errors which have blended with it; not any modifications and arrangements which fallible men have made of it. Ask for a Bible, and see that no spiritual legerdemain slip on the table in the room of it,—Popery or Protestanism, Arminianism or Calvinism, or any other human creed or system. These may be true, or they may be false: they are not standards; they are to be all tried themselves. Ask for the things of God, "not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but in the words the Holy Ghost teacheth." Distinguish between Scripture, and explanations of Scripture; see with your own eyes; explore the good land for yourselves, and before you enter, suffer none to require from you a promise, that when you return, you shall think precisely with them concerning every thing you may discover there. This Divine preacher calls you to come and hear him. If another should step in to prepossess you as you are going—if he should say, "Remember, THIS will be his meaning, though many of his words will seem to have another sense. Some things will require great qualifications. Sometimes there will be a difference between his secret, and his re-

vealed will;" and so on: say, "I will hear him for myself. He speaks to be understood. I have understanding as well as you. What I borrow is not mine own."

But nothing is more adverse to our Saviour's demand than dissipation. Attention is absolutely necessary; and, in order to it, we must call in our thoughts and fix them. The more finite and contracted our powers are; the more loose and roving our minds; the more averse we feel to reflection: the more intellectual and spiritual the subject, the more necessary, and the more difficult, application becomes. But labour and diligence will be amply rewarded in the pleasure of progress and the glory of success. "If thou incline thine ear unto wisdom, and apply thine heart to understanding; if thou criest after knowledge, and liftest up thy voice for understanding; if thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasure: then shalt thou understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God. For the Lord giveth wisdom; out of his mouth cometh knowledge and understanding."

But it is of little use to apply a mind already biased. We are therefore to guard against prejudice. This will always make us partial: it will keep us from doing justice to any sentiment we dislike; while it will lead us to seize with greediness whatever is capable of giving evidence or importance to the opinions we have espoused.

No prejudices are more simple than those which are derived from—"Our fathers worshipped in this mountain." But none are so awful as those which spring from sinful lusts and passions. These will affect practical subjects; entangle the plainest duties; and perplex every rule by which we are unwilling to walk. In this case, a man, before he weighs evidences, will examine consequences. "Why, if I own this, I must renounce the world. I must pluck out a right eye, and cut off a right hand. I must take up my cross. I must be serious, and be circumspect in my conversation." Such inferences are arguments; and they easily prevail with unholy minds, as we see in the case of family worship, and the reception of the Lord's Supper.

Impatience disqualifies us for religious investigation. If we review life, we shall find that many of our mistakes and errors have been occasioned by a hasty judgment. How changed have things appeared when the mind has returned to them at another time, and from a different quarter!

We shall only add, that nothing is so unfavourable to fair and successful inquiry, as pride. We should come to the Gospel, not full, but to be filled; not to cavil, but to learn: sensible of our ignorance, and praying for Divine direction: and receiving "the kingdom of God as a little child." "With the lowly is wisdom." "The meek will He guide in judgment, and the meek will he teach his way." Gather up all these. Here is the Gospel, unveiled and exposed. You need not be afraid to approach it. No authority can restrain you. Be sure, however, that it is the Gospel only you investigate. Banish dissipation, prejudice, impatience, and pride; —and we are neither ashamed nor afraid to say, search, examine the whole system.

Examine the character the sacred writers have given us of God. Is he not a Father, the Father of mercies, the God of all grace, the God of love? Examine the representation they have given of man—Does it not agree with actual life and daily observation? Examine the threatenings they have denounced, and the warnings they have given—Do they not accord with the judgments which God has frequently inflicted on individuals, families, and countries, and which prove a moral government in the world? Examine the promises—Are they not such as the state, and the conscience of man require? Where do they countenance sin? Examine the precepts—take only the command, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and thy neighbour as thyself:" What think you of this command; or, rather, what think you of those men who wish to exclude this principle, and to destroy a book, the grand aim of which is to produce it?—But, alas! many condemn a work which they never read. Nothing is more absurd than to suppose that infidels renounce the Gospel by the force of conviction, after having fully and impartially examined its contents. Be assured, they never weighed the subject, though they are always bold enough to pronounce that it is "found wanting."—Few ever give these things a due consideration.

—Here, however, another class of characters appears in view; for while some refuse to hear, others give these things a hearing ONLY. Now though our Lord and Saviour intends nothing less than hearing, he requires much more—

IV. He demands a PRACTICAL IMPROVEMENT OF HIS WORD. "He that hath ears to hear, let him hear."—"I have delivered many things in your presence, and you have done well in hearing them. But my preaching is not to be viewed as an entertainment. My doctrine is not designed to amuse the mind, to gratify curiosity, to furnish a number of lifeless speculations. Hearing is only instrumental to something else; there is a duty of greater importance still remaining."

What is it, my brethren? What would our Saviour say, in explanation of his command? What has he said in other parts of his word? —"Mix faith with it—Let not the sense leave the mind as soon as the sound leaves the ear —Remember it—Enliven it by meditation— Reduce it into feelings and actions– Fear

these denunciations—Embrace these promises—Obey these commands—Walk according to this rule."

It is a lamentable reflection, that all the concern many of our hearers have with sermons, consists in hearing them. They do not consider hearing as the means of becoming religious—it is their religion. They conclude that their duty is over when the discourse is ended—whereas it is then only begun. Instead of carrying off portions of divine wisdom to illuminate their lives, they leave behind them all the instructions they have received. They do not take the word of God along with them, to guide them in their ordinary walk; to arm them against temptation; to furnish them with the cautions of prudence; to stimulate them to universal conscientiousness. Their tempers are unsubdued, unsoftened, unsanctified: their conversation produces none of "the fruit of the Spirit; which is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance." But the word of God is practical; every truth is announced to accomplish some purpose. If it reveals a refuge, it is that you may enter in and be safe. If it proclaims a remedy, it is that you may use it: it is not your hearing of it, but your applying it, that will save you from death.—You say of a preacher, he ought to DO, as well as to PREACH—and we say of a hearer, he ought to DO, as well as to HEAR. You say, and you say truly, that mere preaching will not save us; and we say, with equal truth, mere hearing will not save you. Never will you attend the dispensation of the word aright, till you make the end which God has in view, in speaking, your end in hearing—And can you imagine that the design of the blessed God, in favouring you with his "glorious Gospel" from sabbath to sabbath, is answered, if, while you regularly enter his courts, you always return the same?—if, after all the sermons you have applauded for twenty or forty years, you are found as malignant, as covetous, as full of the world, as before?—or if your profiting appears only in some dead notions, very well laid out in your minds—in a capacity to weigh preachers in the nicest scales of orthodoxy; or in the useful employment of splitting hairs, and tying and untying knots? What! does the "Gospel of your salvation" intend nothing more, than to make you visionaries or triflers? Is this, teaching you, that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, you should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present world?"

To persons concerned for the honour of the Gospel and the salvation of mankind, the Christian world presents an affecting prospect. Never was the word of God more plentifully preached; never did so many "receive the grace of God in vain." Never was there more seed sown; never did so much fall "by the way-side, on stony places, and among thorns." How little does even the good ground yield! Where is the preacher, the close of whose sabbaths is not embittered by the review of unprofitableness? You invite us to your tables; you crowd us in your temples: but you compel us to retire from both, complaining, "Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?" We condemn your practice: you thank us for our good sermons, and proceed. Your approbation does not hinder your sinning, nor your sinning your approbation.—Where are the evidences of our success? Are they to be heard in the inquiry, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" Are they to be seen in your deadness to the world, in your self-denial, in your taking up the cross, in your heavenly-mindedness, in serving your generation according to the will of God, in being examples to others?—

How shall I impress you with the importance of this? or by what motives can I enforce upon you this practical attention to the Gospel you hear?

Shall I urge the danger of delusion, and say, with the apostle James, "Be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your ownselves?" Shall I remind you of "a foolish builder," who reared "his house upon the sand: and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell; and great was the fall of it!" Such, according to our Saviour, will be the fatal disappointment of all those, who entertain a hope of safety separate from holiness; who have been lulled to sleep by an unsanctified attendance on ordinances; who hear "these sayings of his, and DO them not."

Shall I remind you of the precarious tenure of your privileges, and say, with our Saviour, "Yet a little while is the light with you; walk while ye have the light, lest darkness come upon you?" There are no calls of mercy beyond the grave—and "what is your life? it is even a vapour that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away."—The Jews had distinguished privileges—but "the kingdom of God was taken from them, and given to a nation bringing forth the FRUITS thereof." Where now are the churches of Asia?—YOUR candlestick may be removed. You may be rendered incapable of hearing. The efficacy may be withholden from the means. Surely if any thing can provoke the Supreme Being to take away ordinances, or to make them useless, it must be your awful abuse of them.

Shall I mention the happiness of those who receive the Gospel, "not in word only?"—"And it came to pass, as he spake these things, a certain woman of the company lifted up her voice, and said unto him, Blessed is the womb that bare thee, and the paps which thou hast sucked. But he said, Yea, rather, BLESSED

are they that hear the word of God, and KEEP it." "If ye know these things, HAPPY are ye if ye do them." "Whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a DOER of the WORK, this MAN shall be BLESSED in his DEED."

Need I inform you, that these means, when unimproved, will be found injurious—that the word of God is one of those things, which, if unprofitable, becomes pernicious—that if it does not nourish as food, it will destroy like poison—if it does not soften, it will harden—if it does not justify, it will condemn?

For, remember the awful account which you will be required to give of all your hearing, when called to appear before the bar of God. Then, those sermons which you now so easily forget, will be perfectly revived in your recollection. The Bible from which you have been so often addressed, will be called forth, and you will be judged out of this book. In this judgment will rise up against you, to condemn you, the queen of the south: "for she came from the uttermost parts to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and, behold, a greater than Solomon is here!" In this judgment will rise up against you, to condemn you, "the men of Nineveh: for they repented at the preaching of Jonah; and, behold, a greater than Jonah is here!" In this judgment will rise up against you, to condemn you, all your fellow-worshippers, who, having the same nature and passions with yourselves, and never having heard truths more powerful than those which you have heard, "turned at His reproof; sought the Lord while he was to be found, and called upon him while he was near." In this judgment will rise up against you, to condemn you, those ministers who would gladly have saved not only themselves, but you who heard them:—While "the Saviour shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that OBEY not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ." And can you say, his language will be unreasonable—"Because I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded; but ye have set at nought all my counsel, and would none of my reproof: I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh; when your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind; when distress and anguish cometh upon you?" If you have never heard to purpose before, begin to-day. "To-day, if ye will hear His voice, harden not your hearts." If you are not lost to all sense of your own welfare; if you are not resolved to sacrifice eternal life; if you have not "made a covenant with death, and with hell are not at an agreement; see that ye refuse not Him that speaketh." It is the voice of friendship—it is the voice of conscience—it is the voice of reason—it is the voice of Scripture—it is "the voice of the archangel and the trump of God"—"IF ANY MAN HAVE EARS TO HEAR, LET HIM HEAR."

SERMON IX.

ON PROGRESS IN RELIGION.

There remaineth yet very much land to be possessed.—Joshua xiii. 1.

SUCH was the address of God to Joshua Nor was it in vain. It stirred "up his pure mind by way of remembrance;" and having "assembled the whole congregation of the children of Israel together at Shiloh," he said unto them, "How long are ye slack to go to possess the land which the Lord God of your fathers hath given you?"—They should have marched forward, advancing their arms to the extremities of the promised possession. It was all their own, by Divine grant; and they had only to seize it. When they entered, they burned with zeal; every day was distinguished by some fresh triumph; they went "from conquering to conquer." But their fervour soon cooled, their courage soon failed; and, satisfied with an imperfect acquisition, they laid down their arms, and resumed them only when they became necessary for defence.

And this, my brethren, reminds us of a two-fold reproach, which attaches to Christians. When our Saviour had received "all power in heaven and in earth," for the purpose of spiritual empire, he said to his disciples, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature." "Go ye, and teach all nations; baptizing them in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; and, lo! I am with you always, even to the end of the world." Thus clear, and thus extensive, was their commission. They were to subdue a rebellious globe "to the obedience of faith." This alone was to circumscribe and to terminate their exertions. They began well. The company of the publishers flew like angels, having the everlasting Gospel to preach to the inhabitants of the earth. From Jerusalem they proceeded in all directions, like the lines of a circle from the centre. Commencing in Judea, they soon spread over all Palestine, entered the contiguous countries in Asia, visited the Isles, reached Europe. And successively the banners of the Cross were displayed, in province beyond province, and in clime beyond clime. But instead of continuing their glorious career, after a while they looked back, and were satisfied with their progress: they preferred ease to acquisition; they began to divide the spoil they had gained; they often turned their arms against each other—while the enemy, pressing upon them, frequently obliged them to contract their limits, and to change their

position. From that time their cause has not prospered; and many a judgment has been inflicted, to awaken them to a sense of their sin, and a conviction of their duty. Many a voice has been heard in vain; calling upon them to arise and go forward; reminding them that it was all purchased and promised country; that "the heathen" was destined to be "their inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth" were to become "their possession." May we hope that at length the voice of God is beginning to be heard? and that his messengers spreading abroad to the east and to the west, and to the north and to the south, his "glory shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together?" May the Lord hasten it in his time!

To draw nearer the design of this discourse: Christians, God has assigned YOU a glorious portion. "The lines are fallen to" you "in pleasant places; yea," you "have a goodly heritage." Opening before you the discoveries of revelation, He said, Make all this your own; advance; leave nothing unpossessed—At first you were filled with spiritual ardour. You laid "aside every weight." You were seen on the full stretch to reach "the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls." Had you then heard a prediction of what has since taken place in your dispositions and pursuits, it would have appeared like "an idle tale."—But, alas! you have become these incredible characters. Your love has waxen cold. You have sat down long before you have obtained a complete victory; long before you have finished your course; long before you have realized all the invaluable blessings of your inheritance: and I am come to remind you,—I. THAT THERE REMAINETH YET VERY MUCH LAND TO BE POSSESSED. II. TO CALL UPON YOU TO ARISE, AND MAKE FRESH AND CONTINUED PROGRESS. III. TO GIVE YOU SOME ADVICE WITH REGARD TO YOUR FUTURE EXERTIONS.

PART I. Yes, Christians; THERE REMAINETH YET VERY MUCH LAND TO BE POSSESSED—Many cities and strong-holds, many fine plains, and "springs of water;" many beautiful valleys, and very "fruitful hills:" —or, to speak less in figure, much of your religion is unattained, unoccupied, unenjoyed; you are far from its boundaries. Very little of it indeed do some of you possess; you command only a small inconsiderable corner, scarcely affording you a subsistence. But I use no distinctions: I address myself even to those of you who have made the greatest progress in the Divine life. And surely it is not difficult to make you sensible of your remaining deficiencies. Draw near those illustrious characters, whose history is recorded in the Scriptures of truth.—Compare yourselves with those finished likenesses of Christians, which an infallible pencil has given us in the Gospel. Observe well the sublime intention of the gracious dispensation under which you live, and which is nothing less than to make you "partakers of the Divine nature;" to enable you to live "the life of God;" and to render you "perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect."

Take a survey of your religion—I would examine you with regard to three articles, which have a dependence on each other, and in each of which you will be found "to come" woefully "short."

First, Consider your KNOWLEDGE. While you are men in years, are you not "children in understanding?" You have been liberally favoured with the means of information—Do you possess all you SHOULD have known; and all you COULD have known? After so many years of hearing, what additions have you made to your stores? Are you filled with holy prudence to ponder "the path of your feet," to "look well to your goings," and to discern snares where there is no appearance of danger? Do you "walk circumspectly; not as fools, but as wise?" Have you a sufficiency of holy wisdom to "rule well your own houses," and to "train up your children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord?" Are you able to "give to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you?" Can you apply general principles to particular cases? Can you reconcile promises and providences when they seem adverse to each other? Does "the word of Christ dwell in you RICHLY in ALL wisdom?" Have you clear, combining, and impressive views of ANY truth of the Scripture? And are there not many subjects of revelation with which you have NO acquaintance?—Alas! with many professors of religion, more than half the Bible is entirely useless. They confine their attention only to a few doctrines; and even these they regard not as they are delivered in the undefined grandeur of the sacred writers, but as they are reduced and modelled to stand conveniently in a human creed, or a human system. What a difference is there between the ocean of revelation and such a vessel-full of truth as any formulary of doctrine contains! But the latter has often been mistaken for the former; and, because it is easy to penetrate to the bottom of the one, many imagine they have fathomed the other. David gives us a fine idea of revelation, when he tells us "it is exceeding broad." Of "all" other "perfection" he could see "an end;" but he viewed this as incomprehensible and boundless. Here he saw room for unceasing progress: here, he knew, fresh beauties and glories would be perpetually discovered, to reward the humble and active inquirer. And why should we stand in this extensive country, and suffer a man, fallible like ourselves, and with no better sources of information, to mark us off a piece only of the sacred soil; to draw

around us a circle, over which we are never to step? Hear, O son of Abraham, the voice of thy God: "Go through the land in the length and the breadth of it; for to thee have I given it." Hear the language of one of his servants: "O ye Hebrews, ye are dull of hearing: for when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong drink. For every one that useth milk is unskilful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe. But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age; even those who, by reason of use, have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil. Therefore, leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection." He means perfection in knowledge. He would not have us confine our attention perpetually to a few particular parts; or, to use his own image, would not have us to be always "laying again the foundation," instead of going on with the superstructure. But, alas! when will the understandings of our people suffer us to extend our views? When will they rouse up their minds, and exert their faculties to take in something beyond a few common-place reflections which they have heard times without number! Why will they always constrain us to abide near "the first principles of the oracles of God?" or, if we advance, why will they refuse to accompany us one degree beyond them?

Secondly, Observe your HOLINESS. For the knowledge of persons may surpass their experience; and a growth in gifts is very distinguishable from a growth in grace. Review, then, your sanctification; and suffer me to ask, Have you no remaining corruptions to subdue? Are your passions entirely under the control of reason? Are your affections all heavenly! Are you "crucified to the world?" Have you no undue regard for it, or expectation from it? Are you properly affected with the evil of sin?—do you abhor it, mourn over it, watch against it? Do you "deny yourselves, and take up your cross, and follow Jesus without the camp, gladly bearing his reproach?" Is your obedience universal, unvarying, cheerful? Have you fully imbibed the tempers of your religion? Are there no deficiencies perceivable in every grace, in every duty? Are you "strong in faith?" Do you "abound in hope?" Do you love God, and do you love him supremely? Do you love your neighbour, and do you love him as yourself? Can you "love your enemies, and bless them that curse you?" Are you "clothed with humility?" Is your worship always spiritual? Do you never "offer the sacrifice of fools?" Do you not often pray with formality, and hear in vain?—I need not press these inquiries. If you are Christians indeed, you are ready to answer them with sighs and tears:—"Enter not into judgment with thy servant: my soul cleaveth to the dust: O wretched man that I am: perfect that which concerneth me; thy mercy, O Lord, endureth for ever; forsake not the work of thine own hands."

Thirdly, Think of your PRIVILEGES. These are innumerable and invaluable.—It is the privilege of Christians to have "exceeding great and precious promises." It is the privilege of Christians to be "careful for nothing." It is the privilege of Christians "to enter into rest." It is the privilege of Christians to "have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." It is the privilege of Christians to "walk all day in the light of his countenance; to rejoice in the Lord always; to rejoice in him with joy unspeakable and full of glory." It is the privilege of Christians to "count it all joy when they fall into divers temptations; and to glory in tribulation also." And all this has been exemplified. Men have "received the Gospel in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Ghost: they have taken pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ's sake:" they have "taken joyfully the spoiling of their goods;" they have approached the flames with rapture; they have loved and longed for "HIS appearing"—But where are you? Always in darkness and alarms; always among thorns and briers; always murmuring and complaining; having religion enough to make you miserable, but not enough to make you happy. Do you belong to the same community? Have you the same privileges with them? the same heaven with them? the same God with them? the same Comforter with them? What should we think of all the high praises of religion, if it had no more consolation and pleasure to afford than you possess?—Thus, whether we examine your knowledge, or your holiness, or your privileges, it will appear that much lies still before you; much to understand; much to perform; much to enjoy—Week after week, year after year, God comes to observe your progress, and finds you, if not drawn back, fixed in the place you occupied before.

PART II. And whence is this? Why will you suffer all this remaining region to be unpossessed? How shall I awaken you from your negligence, and convince you of the PROPRIETY and NECESSITY of making FRESH AND CONTINUAL ADVANCES?

First, I would place before you the COMMANDS OF GOD. You are forbidden to draw back; you are forbidden to be stationary. Something more is necessary than languid, partial, occasional, temporary progression, You are required to be "steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord:" to "add to your faith, virtue; and to virtue, knowledge; and to knowledge, temperance; and to temperance, patience; and

to patience, godliness; and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, charity: to walk worthy of the Lord unto all well-pleasing; being fruitful in every good work:" to "grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour."—Such is the morality of the Gospel: and these are the commands of God, which you have professed to make the rule of your actions.

Secondly, I would surround you with all the IMAGES employed by the sacred writers, when they would describe the nature of a religious life. For which of them does not imply progress, and remind us of the importance of undiminished ardour and unceasing exertion? Is it "the shining light?" This "shines more and more unto the perfect day." Is it the growing grain? Behold, "first the blade; then the ear; after that, the full corn in the ear." Is it the mustard seed? What though its beginning be small, "when it is grown, it is the greatest among herbs, and becometh a tree; so that the birds of the air come and lodge in the branches thereof." Is it leaven? It pervades "the meal, till the whole be leavened." Is the Christian a scholar; and is he only to retain what he has already acquired? Is he running a race; and in the middle of his course does he set down to rest, or step aside to gather flowers? Is he a warrior; and does he sleep, not only in the field, but even in the action?

Thirdly, I would call forth EXAMPLES in your presence: they teach you the same truth. Who said, "I beseech thee, shew me thy glory? A man who had "seen God face to face." Who prayed, "Teach me thy statutes: open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law?" A man, who had "more understanding than all his teachers: a man, who understood more than the ancients"—It is needless to multiply instances. Perhaps no man ever carried religion to a higher degree—perhaps no individual had ever so much reason to be satisfied with his proficiency as the apostle Paul. But hear his language to the Philippians: "Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do; forgetting those things which are behind"—And what things had he to forget? The churches he had established; the sermons he had preached; his prayers and epistles; journeys and perils; unexampled labours; the abundance of his revelations; his entering the third heaven—all this, says he, "is behind; all this I deem unworthy of recollection, compared with the future. I am reaching forth unto those things which are before; I press toward the mark, for the prize of my high calling of God in Christ Jesus."—And have we attained; are we "already perfect?" And shall we leave off to make advances? Shall we be satisfied with our trifling acquisitions?

Fourthly, I would hold up to view the ADVANTAGES of progressive religion.

A Christian should be concerned for the honour of God. He is under infinite obligations to "shew forth the praises of Him, who hath called us out of darkness into his marvellous light:" but "herein is" our "Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit."

A Christian should be concerned for the welfare of his fellow creatures. He should be a blessing to his family; to his country. He should be as a "dew from the Lord," fertilizing the place in which he lives. He should have a stock, not only sufficient to sustain himself, but to relieve others. He should be a stream, at which the thirsty may drink; a shadow, under which the weary may refresh themselves. He should be the image of his Lord and Saviour, going about doing good, casting out unclean spirits, opening the eyes of the blind, binding up the broken-hearted. —But the more grace he possesses, the more qualified will he be for usefulness; the more will he be disposed and enabled to do good.

A Christian should be concerned for his own prosperity. And has he to learn wherein it consists? Need he be told, that adding grace to grace, is adding "strength to strength," dignity to dignity, beauty to beauty, joy to joy? It is with the Christian as it is with the man in trade: the more he acquires, the more he is enabled to gain: every increase is not only a possession, but a capacity. "To him that hath, shall be given, and he shall have more abundantly; but from him that hath not, shall be taken away even that which he seemeth to have." The more sin is mortified in us, the less will the "prince of this world find" to encourage his approach; the less susceptible shall we be of temptation in the scenes of danger through which we pass.—There is something very attractive and pleasing in progress. It is agreeable to observe a stately edifice rising up from the deep basis, and becoming a beautiful mansion. It is entertaining to see the rough outline of a picture filled and finished. It is striking, in the garden, to behold the tree renewing signs of life; to mark the expanding foliage, the opening bud, the lovely blossom, the swelling, colouring, ripening fruit. And where is the father, where is the mother, who has not sparkled with delight, while contemplating the child growing in stature; acquiring by degrees the use of its tender limbs; beginning to totter, and then to walk more firmly; the pointing finger succeeded by the prattling tongue; curiosity awakened; reason dawning; new powers opening; the character forming?—But nothing is to be compared with the progress of "this building of God;" these "trees of righteousness;" this "changing into His image from glory to glory;" this process of "the new creature," from the hour of rege-

neration "unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ." And, oh! what is it when we are the subjects too!

The nearer we live to heaven, the more of its pure and peaceful influence we shall enjoy. The way of life, narrow at the entrance, widens as we proceed. It is the nature of habits to render their acts easy and delightful. There is little pleasure in religion if there be no fervency: if there be no vigour in faith, no zeal in devotion, no life in duty, religion is without a soul; it is the mere carcass of inanimate virtue. What sensations of ecstasy, what prospects of assurance, can such Christians expect! In conversion, as in the alteration of an old edifice, we first demolish: and this only furnishes us with rubbish and ruins: but afterwards we raise up an orderly beautiful building, in which we are refreshed and charmed. What happiness arises from difficulties overcome, and from labour crowned with success! What emotions can equal the joy of one, who after the painful battle "divides the spoil?" But what can resemble the satisfaction of the Christian, who, on each successful exertion, gathers fresh "glory, honour, and immortality!"—The life of the active Christian is the labour of the bee; who all day long is flying from the hive to the flower, or from the flower to the hive—but all his business is confined to fragrancy, and productive of sweets.

There are many promises made to perseverance in the divine life; and this is one: "Then shall we know if we follow on to know the Lord: his going forth is prepared as the morning; and he shall come unto us as the rain, as the latter and the former rain unto the earth." This is the way to obtain Divine refreshments and manifestations: and the Saviour we pursue, upon every pleasing surprise we express, will say, "Thou shalt see greater things than these." Some of you are much perplexed as to your spiritual condition: the reason is obvious; little things are scarcely perceptible—let your religion be enlarged, and it will become more conspicuous. And, to close this part of our discourse, remember, that it is an awful proof that you have no real religion if your are satisfied with what you have. A degree of experience, however small, would stimulate; the relish would provoke the appetite; and having "tasted that the Lord is gracious," your language would be, "evermore give us this bread." The nearer a person in any profession or science approaches to perfection, the more clearly will he perceive, and the more painfully will he feel his remaining imperfections. In nothing is this more undeniable, than in religious proficiency. This being the case, I am presuaded, Christians, you are prepared,

PART III. To receive some ADMONITIONS WITH REGARD TO YOUR FUTURE EFFORTS. If you would advance,

First, Shake off INDOLENCE. Nothing is more injurious to our progress; and, alas! nothing is more common. It has indeed been said, that sloth is a vice the most universally natural to all mankind. They discover it as to bodily exercise; still more with regard to mental application; but it appears most of all in religious pursuits. Upon this principle, many are influenced in their choice of preachers, and in their adoption of sentiments. This makes them fonder of speculations, which bear very softly upon the heart and life, than of those truths which inculcate a holy practice. They find it is easier to hear weekly a number of sermons, than to teach their children the duties of the Gospel, and to maintain serious devotion in their families, and in their closets. Man loves indulgence: he needs a stimulus, to make him arise from the bed of sloth, to exert his faculties, and to employ the means of which he is possessed. And one would naturally conclude that in religion he would find it—As he sits at ease, revelation draws back the veil, and shews him the most astonishing realities—an eternal world; whatever can sting with motive; whatever can alarm with fear; whatever can animate with hope. What a Being to please, on whom it depends to save or to destroy! What a state of misery is there to escape! What an infinite happiness to secure!—Survey the prize. In seeking honour, men sacrifice their peace, submit to mortifications, climb ascents the most slippery and hazardous. To gain wealth, they rise up early, sit up late, eat the bread of carefulness. And what beggarly, unsatisfying advantages are all earthly things! The rich man, "in the midst of his sufficiency, may be in straits." The conqueror may be wrung with sorrow even on the day of his triumph. Now "they run for a corruptible crown, but we for an incorruptible." Shall they be zealous in trifles, and we remain cold and motionless in matters of endless importance? Or do you imagine diligence is unnecessary? But does not every thing valuable require labour? Do we ever highly esteem that which costs us nothing? Indolence never ploughs or sows, and therefore never reaps. It never plants or prunes, and therefore never gathers the clusters of the grapes: nothing great was ever performed by it; nothing great was ever possessed by it. "The soul of the diligent" only "shall be made fat." "Win and wear it," says Bishop Latimer, "is inscribed on the crown of glory which fadeth not away." Be assured, "your strength is not to sit still. Be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises."

Secondly, Beware of DIVERSION.—Discharge yourself as much as possible from su-

perfluous cares. Distinguish between diligence in lawful business, and "entangling yourselves in the affairs of this life." This sometimes arises from a multiplicity of concerns, and more frequently from the want of order and skill in the management of them. Thus you are robbed of the temper, and the attention, and the opportunities, which devotion requires. The good old men who have gone before us, lived as long again as you do in the same number of years. They redeemed their time; they rose early; they moved by rule; they planned every thing; they would have leisure for religion; and if time fell short, the body and the world suffered the loss; they never robbed the soul, and trifled with eternity. To avoid diversion, you would do well to remember that religion is the grand business of life; that to this you must render ever thing else SUBORDINATE and SUBSERVIENT; that you are not to confine your pious regards and attentions to the sabbath, or the temple. You are to "walk in the fear of the Lord all the day long; and whether ye eat or drink, or whatever ye do, you are to do all to the glory of God." In his journey the traveller may pause for a moment to behold the beauty of the scenery around him; or, in the evening, he may "turn aside to tarry for a night;" but in the morning he goes on his way: nothing diverts him; he thinks only of the object for which he set out. If, however, a man goes forth without an end in view, or does not feel the necessity of pursuing it; if he travels extempore, and leaves the determination of his course to accident; he is liable to be caught with any pleasing prospect; he will be ready to comply with any flattering invitation; he will be driven back, or turned aside, by every appearance of difficulty.—Fix your aim, my brethren, and establish in your minds a conviction of the importance of it. Then you will no longer live at random; then you will have a principle which will simplify all your concerns, by giving them one common tendency; then you will have a director to guide you in every perplexing uncertainty; then you will have a standard, by which to decide what you are to shun, and what you are to pursue: it will induce you to examine all with a reference to this, and to make all contribute to this. Every occurrence will furnish lessons and helps. In relation to this we shall judge of what is good or evil: this will keep us from murmuring when we feel things which, though painful, urge us forward; and from sighing for things which, though pleasing, will prove an incumbrance.

I would remark, further, that there are not only diversions FROM religion, but diversions IN it; and of these also you are to beware. Here, finding you are unsuspicious of danger, the enemy often succeeds: for his end is frequently answered by things good in themselves. He is satisfied if he can draw off your attention from great things, and engross it with little ones; if he can make you prefer opinions to practice, and controversy to devotion; if, by consuming your zeal on the circumstantials of religion, he can render your minds cold to the essence; if he can bring you to lay more stress upon those peculiarities in which you differ, than upon those all-important points in which you agree.

Thirdly, Guard against DESPONDENCY. There are indeed many things which when viewed alone, have a tendency to discourage the mind. We know your weakness, and we know the difficulties and dangers to which you are exposed. Your progress will prove warlike; your possession, like the inheritance of the Jews, is to be conquered: but "be courageous;" nothing will so much animate you as holy confidence. To strengthen this principle, you have the promise of a faithful God. It encourages you with an assurance of eventual success, and of immediate assistance. The advantages are certain as they are great. The labour and the hope of the husbandman may be destroyed: but here are no casualties —"He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him." The soldier fights uncertainly: but there is no peradventure in this warfare—"Yea, in all these things we are more than conquerors, through Him that loved us." How enlivening is the persuasion that we cannot be defeated in our enterprise, or disappointed in our hope! But you want immediate help. And God has engaged that you shall not advance alone: his presence shall be with you, and his grace shall be sufficient for you. "So that you may boldly say, the Lord is my helper. I will not fear. I will go forth in the strength of the Lord."—See, however, that your confidence be scriptural, and your reliance properly placed: And,

Fourthly, Beafraid of PRESUMPTION. "Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall; but they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength: they shall mount up with wings as eagles, they shall run and not be weary, and they shall walk and not faint." Our dependence upon God is absolute and universal. "In him we live, and move, and have our being." His agency is more indispensable in spiritual things than in natural: sin has rendered us peculiarly weak, helpless, and disaffected. Without him we can do nothing. Our progress in religion will be in proportion to his influences. We are "led by the Spirit of God;" "we live in the Spirit; we walk in the Spirit." Be sensible of this, and, as a proof of it, be much in prayer. Prayer is the language of dependence: by this we call for succour, and by this we obtain it. Thus, "when we are weak, then are we strong," because this sense of our insufficiency leads

us to implore the power of God; and "if we seek, we shall find." Hence it follows, that if we have not more grace, it is because we pray so little. Prayer increases religion by its very exercise. It naturally promotes resignation, cherishes hope, and strengthens faith. Our intercourse with God will naturally diminish worldly impressions on the mind, and refine and elevate our powers: it will increase our resemblance of God; and we shall come forth from his presence like Moses, shining in his rays. Prayer also is rich in promise: "I never said to the seed of Jacob, seek ye me, in vain."—"The Lord is nigh unto all them that call upon him, to all them that call upon him in truth; he will fulfil the desire of them that fear him; he will also hear their cry, and will save them." On these two principles, prayer ranks highest among those institutions which we call means of grace; and will be incessantly regarded by all those who are concerned to enjoy soul-prosperity.

Fifthly, It would be profitable for you to "call to remembrance the former days," and especially to REVIEW THE BEGINNING OF YOUR RELIGIOUS COURSE. It is said of Jehoshaphat, that "he walked in the FIRST WAYS of his father David:" it is an intimation that he was not so zealous, and so accurate in his conversation, afterwards. Our Saviour tells the church of Ephesus, "I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy FIRST love: remember from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do thy FIRST works." Ah! Christians, do not your minds appropriate this reproach!—O how you abounded in the duties of obedience then! O how you prized ordinances! O how you longed for the sabbath; and how glad were you "when they said, let us go into the house of the Lord!" How much of your time was employed in meditation, and prayer, and praise! And all was deemed a privilege! There was nothing like burden or bondage. How did the bitterness of repentance make you loathe sin; and at what an awful distance did you keep yourselves from its approach! How glorious did the Saviour appear in your deliverance; and with what vigour did you say, "Lord, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest!"—Must I "cry in the ears of Jerusalem, saying, thus saith the Lord, I remember thee the kindness of thy youth, and the love of thine espousals, when thou wentest after me in the wilderness, in a land that was not sown!" Alas! is it necessary to lead you back in the history of your religion, and to derive from yourselves in former years examples to excite you now? To make you blush at a change not for the better, but the worse; to cover you with confusion, by comparing the slackness of your progress with the ardours of your commencement?

Finally, It will not be less profitable for you TO LOOK FORWARD, AND SURVEY THE CLOSE OF ALL. Christians! "it is high time to awake out of sleep; for now is your salvation nearer than when ye believed: the night is far spent, the day is at hand." Would you slumber on the verge of heaven? The stream increases as it approximates the sea; motion accelerates as it approaches the centre.—You have beheld dying saints, and have often heard them mourn that they had been so negligent, and that they had done so little for God in their day and generation; and are you resolved to fill a dying hour with similar regrets? Did you know that "the time of" your "departure was at hand," you instantly would arise, and have "your loins girded, and your lamps burning." But the season will come soon, and may come immediately. Therefore "whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest."

—Yes; this is the only opportunity you will have to do good to others and to get good for yourselves. Joshua had the day protracted, to enable him to complete his victory;—but no addition will be made to yours: no sun will stand still while you finish your course. See! the shadows of the evening are closing in; and "the night cometh, wherein no man can work." Will you always be in a condition which will render reprieve anxiously desirable? Will you be always praying, when you apprehend the summons, "O spare me, that I may recover strength, before I go hence and be no more!" Does it require no more mortification than you now possess, submissively and cheerfully to bid farewell to the world? Does it require no more assurance of hope than you now feel, to pass fearlessly the dark "valley of the shadow of death?"—And what a trial awaits you beyond the grave! For there is a tribunal before which, superficial tears will not be considered as repentance; a happy temper will not pass for conversion; a few sluggish endeavours will not be accepted in the room of vital godliness—nothing will be crowned but a faith that "overcomes the world;" a "hope that purifies even as He is pure;" a love that "constrains us to live not to ourselves, but to Him that died for us, and rose again;" a patience "that endureth to the end:" a perseverance that keeps us from "being weary in well-doing"—"The Lord grant that we may find mercy of the Lord in that day."—Amen, and Amen.

SERMON X.

THE SECURE ALARMED

Woe to them that are at ease in Zion!
Amos vi. 1.

THERE is something very agreeable and desirable in EASE. Even external ease is valua-

ble; and we are ready to pronounce the man happy, whose connexions and affairs are all prosperous and peaceful. But what is external ease—without bodily? Pain will produce anguish, which neither riches nor palaces can relieve. An aching head, a jarring tooth, will destroy all the sensations of pleasure arising from worldly things. Enter the house of affliction; observe thy neighbour; "he is chastened with pain also upon his bed, and the multitude of his bones with strong pain; so that his life abhorreth bread, and his soul dainty meat: his flesh is consumed away, that it cannot be seen; and his bones, that were not seen, stick out: yea, his soul draweth near unto the grave, and his life to the destroyers." Perhaps some of you have been in a similar condition; your "soul hath it still in remembrance;" you said, "I am made to possess months of vanity, and wearisome nights are appointed to me: when I lie down, I say, when shall I arise, and the night be gone? I am full of tossings to and fro unto the dawning of the day: my bed does not comfort me, nor my couch ease my complaint." O how delicious is health after sickness, and ease after pain! But what is bodily ease without mental? "The spirit of a man may sustain his infirmity; but a wounded spirit who can bear?" Can a man be happy while corroded with care, fretted with envy, burning with malice, perplexed with doubts, tormented with fears? Think of a man who carries, lodged within him, a troubled conscience—"He eats ashes like bread, and mingles his drink with weeping;" "His life hangs in suspense before him, and he has none assurance of his life;" He trembles at the shaking of a leaf; "Terrors take hold on him, as waters: a tempest stealeth him away in the night;" "He is scared with dreams, and terrified with visions." O what can be so precious as peace of mind—a calm within!

—And yet, strange as the declaration may appear, this tranquillity is too common; and to disturb it, is the design of this discourse: a design, not only justified by inspired example, and demanded by ministerial fidelity, but required even by love to your souls. For though it may wear the appearance of harshness, it is in reality the kindest expression of friendship: it is the severity of one who rushes forth, and breaks in upon your pleasing reverie, when you approach the brink of a dreadful precipice; it is the severity of one, who should knock loudly, and interrupt your repose, when he perceived your house becoming the prey of devouring flames, and saw you had scarcely time to escape: for your peace is a false peace. It is the friendship of Joab concealing his murderous dagger. It is the slumber of Samson in the lap of Delilah, softly depriving him of his locks. It is a sleep obtained by opium. It is the loss of feeling, the presage of death. It is the calm of the dead sea, the consequence and the evidence of a curse. Thus we have observed, that before a fall of exceedingly heavy rain, the wind has been unusually still. Thus travellers inform us, that before an earthquake the air is uncommonly serene. Whether therefore you will hear, or whether you will forbear, I sound the alarm, and give you warning from God—"Woe to them that are at ease in Zion!"

But it will be proper to ascertain precisely the characters whose delusion we wish to destroy. Who deserves this charge? Who is obnoxious to this curse? Some are "at ease in Zion," from SELFISH INSENSIBILITY—some, from INFIDEL PRESUMPTION—some, from VAIN CONFIDENCE—some, from PRACTICAL INDIFFERENCE.

I. Some "are at ease in Zion," from SELFISH INSENSIBILITY. Such there were in the days of Amos. "They lie," says the prophet, "on beds of ivory, and stretch themselves upon their couches, and eat the lambs out of the flock, and the calves out of the midst of the stall: they chaunt to the sound of the viol, and invent to themselves instruments of music, like David: they drink wine in bowls, and anoint themselves with the chief ointment; BUT ARE NOT GRIEVED FOR THE AFFLICTION OF JOSEPH." In similar language, Isaiah upbraids the Jews: "In that day did the Lord God of Hosts call to weeping, and to mourning, and to baldness, and to girding with sackcloth: and, behold, joy and gladness, slaying oxen, and killing sheep, eating flesh, and drinking wine; let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we shall die." How criminal this appeared in the eyes of Jehovah, may be inferred from the threatening: "And it was revealed in mine ears by the Lord of Hosts, surely, this iniquity shall not be purged from you till ye die, saith the Lord God of Hosts."

In this representation we discover something peculiarly applicable to many in our day. The judgments of God have been abroad in the earth, nor has our own nation escaped their influence. We have passed through a period singularly awful and trying. In no common degree have we been called upon to become serious, humble, and susceptible of instruction and impression. What instruction have we received? What impression has been made upon our minds? What amusements have we relinquished! What correspondence of feeling with the dealings of God have we discovered? What sympathy in the necessities and woes of half-fed perishing multitudes have we expressed? What tears have we shed over the funeral of three millions of our fellow-creatures, and six hundred thousand of our fellow-countrymen, all torn from their beloved connexions, all hurried into an eternal state! Whatever occurs, these human brutes graze on. "They regard not the work of the Lord, neither consider the operation of his hands." The cares of the world engross them: the pleasures of the world amuse them. The

miseries of mankind are nothing to them. Like members severed from the body of humanity, they are dead, and devoid of feeling. "A thousand may fall at their side, and ten thousand at their right hand;" they are satisfied if it does "not come nigh them." An attention to their own indulgence regulates all their actions. They pass by on the other side the poor traveller wounded, bleeding, half-dead, lest their feelings should be shocked at the spectacle. If they ever give of their abundance, or distribute any thing that remains after every passion and appetite is gratified to excess, they avoid every sacrifice of charity,—all expense of trouble and of feeling; they do not "visit the fatherless and the widows in their affliction." The eye would affect the heart; and the heart must not be affected—it is their plan to live "at ease." And sorry am I to be compelled to say, that there are not a few florid professors of the Gospel who expose themselves to this censure—persons who are zealous for orthodox sentiments, but cold in generous affections: "having a name to live," while they "are dead" to all those fine and tender feelings, which render us social and useful; which constitute the glory of the man, and of the Christian—"This man's religion is vain."

Your dispositions, my brethren, are always to correspond with the providence of God, and the purposes for which he placed you in the world. He continues the poor always with you, and encompasses you with diversified scenes of distress, to awaken your attention; to increase your benevolence; to discover your excellencies: and to form you into a resemblance of Himself; that "you may be merciful, even as your Father which is in heaven is merciful." The Stoics indeed placed all mercy in beneficence, as distinguished from sympathy and commiseration. Weeping with another, was a littleness of soul unbecoming a wise man. Their doctrine required this; for if they were to be insensible to their own afflictions, they were surely forbidden to feel the calamities of others. But it is obviously the design of God, that we should lay the miseries of others to heart, and that the kindness we shew them should flow from compassion. And so necessary is the exercise of this tenderness to the condition of mankind, which is a state of misery and dependence, that He has bound it upon us by a natural, as well as by a moral law. Such is the very frame and organization of the body; such the motion and direction of the animal spirits on the sight of distress; that we cannot help being moved and pained: and therefore before we can be unmerciful, we must become unnatural; and before we offer a violence to morality, we must offer one to nature. And we may observe also, that the strength of the social instinct is in proportion to the importance of its exercise in human life: the degree of emotion which excites us to weep with the miserable, is stronger than the degree of sensation which urges us to rejoice with the prosperous; because the former stand more in need of our sympathy and assistance than the latter. God has clearly expressed his will in the Scriptures. There he requires us to "mind every man also the things of others;" to be "pitiful;" to "put on bowels of mercies." Society is placed before us, both civil and religious, as a body, where, "if one member suffers, all the members suffer with it." The Gospel, we are assured, not only illuminates, but softens: it takes away "the heart of stone," and gives us "a heart of flesh." This influence of divine grace we are never suffered to overlook in those characters which are held forth as worthy of our imitation. View David: what think you of a man who could say even of them who had "rewarded him evil for good, to the spoiling of his soul—As for me, when they were sick, my clothing was sackcloth: I humbled my soul with fasting: I behaved myself as though he had been my friend or brother; I bowed down heavily, as one that mourneth for his mother." Nehemiah, though high in office, the favourite of the king, and enjoying every personal satisfaction, is distressed because his "brethren are in affliction, and the city of his God lies waste." Jeremiah cries, "For the hurt of the daughter of my people am I hurt, I am black; astonishment has taken hold on me—O that my head were waters, and mine eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night for the slain of the daughter of my people." Paul could ask, "Who is weak, and I am not weak; who is offended, and I burn not?" Above all, contemplate Him who "went about doing good;" "who, when exhausted with fatigue, suffered the moments allotted to needful repose to be invaded, without murmuring; who "in all our afflictions was afflicted;" who, by an exquisite sensibility, made the sorrows he beheld his own; who "took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses;" who, when he saw the multitude fainting and having nothing to eat, "had compassion on them;" who wept WITH friends at the grave of Lazarus, and OVER enemies as "he drew near Jerusalem."

Woe to such as have no claim to the honour of classing with these men of mercy, headed by the God of love! You may perhaps be ready to congratulate yourselves: you may imagine that you escape much anguish; and that you would only increase your sufferings by sharing in the grief of others. Now, acknowledging this, yet would it not be virtuous, and peculiarly praiseworthy? would it not enable you to resemble Him, who "pleased not himself;" and who, "though he was rich, yet for our sakes became poor?" But we are not going to applaud insensibility: the tenderness we recommended is accompa-

med with sensations far superior to any the selfish and the unfeeling ever experience. If it is a source of pain, it is also a source of pleasure. This sensibility gives another degree of life; adds a new sense; enlarges the sphere of satisfaction; and increases the relish of enjoyment.

For the unfeeling wretch conscience has no kind office to perform; it has no pleasing recollections or prospects, with which to refresh him; no delicious entertainments with which to feast him. It never caresses, but it often smites.—"Neither do they which go by say, the blessing of the Lord be upon you; we bless you, in the name of the Lord." For him no orphan prays, no widow sings. To all the luxury of a Job he is a stranger—"When the ear heard me, then it blessed me; and when the eye saw me, it gave witness to me; because I delivered the poor when he cried, the fatherless, and him that had none to help him: the blessing of him that was ready to perish came upon me, and I caused the widow's heart to sing for joy." For him the evil day comes on, charged with every horror. He has no asylum in the feelings of the community, the happiness of whose members he never sought. When he fails, there is none to receive him: every application is rejected; homeless and destitute, he hears from many a merciless lip, "His mischief is returned upon his own head, and his violent dealing is come down upon his own pate." Seized with affliction, he is led into his chamber, but hears from no inspired voice, as he enters, "The Lord will deliver him in time of trouble: the Lord will strengthen him upon the bed of languishing: he will make all his bed in his sickness." His offspring appear: he beholds "the desire of his eyes," on whose desolate hours he should have entailed mercy: but not to him belongs the promise, "His seed is blessed;" no divine Comforter says, "Leave thy fatherless children, I will preserve them alive; and let thy widow trust in me."—"The memory of the just is blessed: but the name of the wicked shall rot." To a dying man there is something in the thought that he shall not be missed; that his character is more perishable than his body; that the door of life will be shut upon him, and bolted, before he is scarcely out; that sinks the wretch lower than the grave.—But "after death, the judgment;" and his rolling eyes read, inscribed on the wall, "He shall have judgment without mercy, who shewed no mercy." Have you courage to pursue him further? See him at the bar of God; there to answer for crimes, which at no tribunal here are punishable: he is tried for being close-handed and hard-hearted—And what fellowship can there be between an unfeeling wretch, and a Saviour, full of "tender mercy?"—"Then shall the king say unto them on his left hand, depart, ye cursed"—'Why? we were not profligate, we never oppressed any'—"I was an hungered, and ye gave me no meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink; I was a stranger, and ye took me not in; naked, and ye clothed me not; sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not"—'Lord, when saw we thee an hungered, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee?'—"Verily, I say unto you, inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these my brethren, ye did it not to me."

II. Some "are at ease in Zion," from INFIDEL PRESUMPTION. If there be any truth in the Scriptures, the dispositions of the generality of mankind are very unsuitable to their state and their destiny. When we see them amused with trifles; when we view them sleeping securely; when we hear them singing, devoid of all concern; we are ready to ask, Is this a prison? Are these men under sentence of condemnation, and waiting only the hour of execution?—Such is the testimony of this Book. "The wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men.—Upon the wicked, God shall rain down fire and brimstone, and an horrible tempest: this shall be the portion of their cup.—He that believeth not, is condemned already."—Why then are they not alarmed? They do not believe. Were they persuaded of "the terror of the Lord," it would be impossible for them to live in a state of apathy and indifference. Could they believe that "God resisteth the proud," and be easy in their pride? Could they believe that he "abhorreth the covetous," and be easy in their covetousness? No; did you really believe the truth of God, and were you fully convinced that all the threatenings he has denounced in his word will be infallibly accomplished, "the joints of your loins would be loosed, and your knees would smite one against another." If you had the faith of a Noah, it would "move you with fear," and lead you to "build an ark." If you had only the faith of a devil, you would "tremble." But you have not even this. Thus the sacred writers have reasoned before us: "Wherefore doth the wicked contemn God? He hath said in his heart, God will not requite it—They have belied the Lord, and said, It is not He; neither shall evil come upon us, neither shall we see the sword or famine.—Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil:"—Because the gallows is not in sight when the judge pronounces the sentence, they conclude upon their security.—"Where is the promise of his coming?"—all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation.—One generation passeth away, and another

cometh; but the earth abideth for ever.—But, after all, what is this ease which flows from infidel persuasion?

First, It is obtained with difficulty. For before a man who designs to get rest in this way, can sit down safe and undisturbed, he has to prove that the Scripture is a falsehood; he has to reason down every species of evidence; he has to bring his mind to believe the strangest improbabilities, and the grossest contradictions; he has to explain how weak men could deliver the sublimest wisdom, and wicked men could be the most ardent friends of virtue, the most zealous promoters of holiness—he has to demonstrate that those persons who took nothing on trust, and who made every kind of proof their study, were all deceived where they professed themselves to be most certain; he has to persuade himself that he is wiser than the wisest of mankind: and though, in this case, his vanity would much aid his conviction; yet surely, taking the whole together, it can be no inconsiderable task.

Secondly, It is partial, and liable to interruption. For there can be no perfect satisfaction, without perfect certainty. Now this, it is impossible so acquire. In spite of all his endeavours to extirpate it, some remains of truth will occasionally vex him. There is an internal witness, whose voice will be sometimes heard: when conscience cannot govern, it can censure; when it has not power enough to satisfy, it is able to torment. Sleeping convictions will sometimes be awakened, and fresh endeavours will be needful to lull them again to repose. Though they are not always "in bondage to fear," they are as the apostle remarks, "subject to it;" and a faithful reproof, or an alarming sermon, an accident or a disease, a sudden death or an opening grave, and a thousand other things, may revive their alarm, and make them dread a futurity at which they have laboured to laugh. In these cases, their grand resource is diversion; and they rush into company and amusement, in order to erase the impressions. Yet who can always be engaged? who can always avoid thought?

But, thirdly, the less liable it is to be disturbed, the more awful; for it is penal. It shews that God has suffered them to wander very remote from the truth they deemed their enemy, and to penetrate far into the darkness they loved. There is something more insensible than "a spirit of slumber." It is questioned, whether it be possible for any man to be really an atheist: but is there any thing too bad for a man to fall into, when abandoned of God? And is there nothing that can provoke God to withdraw his assistance from the sinner? Is He compelled to accompany him when he says, "Depart from me, for I desire not the knowledge of thy ways!" Is He unjust, because He does not force the inclinations of a man; but allows him, in compliance with his own wishes, to go alone? If there be an atheist, we should not search for him in the heathen world, but among those "who are at ease in Zion."—"For this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them.—They received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved; and for this cause, God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie; that they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness."

Hence, fourthly, this ease is fatal. Its duration is momentary; it must end, and end in anguish and despair. The denial of any thing does not falsify it. If a man has swallowed poison, his adopting an opinion that it cannot kill him, contributes nothing to his safety: and it is awful to stand and see his conviction and his death arriving together. Your denying a resurrection, will not hide you for ever in the grave. Your disbelieving a day of retribution, will not keep you from appearing before God. "Their judgment," says the apostle, "now of a long time lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not:"—while they reason, it rolls on; every argument brings it one distance nearer.

The confutation set off before the infidel began the book, and it may arrive before he has finished it. Noah preached to the inhabitants of the old world—they derided him, and pursued their business and their pleasures; but "the flood came, and took them all away." When Lot warned "his sons-in-law, he seemed unto them as one that mocked:" but the cities were destroyed. Various things prophesied of the Jews, at a time when there was no human probability of their occurrence, were minutely accomplished. Babylon seemed secure: its walls were impregnable; its provisions defied a siege: hence her confidence: "For thou hast trusted in thy wickedness—thou hast said in thine heart, I am, and there is none else beside me: therefore shall evil come upon thee, thou shalt not know from whence it riseth: and mischief shall fall upon thee, thou shalt not be able to put it off: and desolation shall come upon thee suddenly, which thou shalt not know"—And it was taken and destroyed in one night. "The Scriptures cannot be broken:" therefore thus it will be with all the threatenings of Heaven: and "when they shall say, Peace and safety, then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape." Nor will they only be condemned notwithstanding their unbelief; but they will be punished for it. Men are never more offended than when their

veracity is suspected; and they are instantly ready to demand satisfaction for the injurious affront—and can you "turn the truth of God into a lie," with impunity? "If there should be among you any man, who, when he heareth the words of this curse, shall bless himself in his heart, saying, I shall have peace, though I walk in the imagination of my heart to add drunkenness to thirst; the Lord will not spare him, but then the anger of the Lord and his jealousy shall smoke against that man; and all the curses that are written in this book shall lie upon him, and the Lord shall blot out his name from under heaven."

III. Some "are at ease in Zion," from VAIN CONFIDENCE; relying on the goodness of their present state, and on the certainty of their future happiness. See one of these deluded creatures going up into the temple to pray—"The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself: God, I thank thee that I am not as other men are,—extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess." In this state, according to his own confession, was Paul once—"I was alive, without the law;" cheerful and happy, full of false hope and false joy, fully satisfied of my acceptance with God, and a stranger to all apprehension of danger. Such was the Church of Laodicea—"Thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked." Nor are these instances unusual, or singular; "for there is a GENERATION that are pure in their own eyes, and yet are not washed from their filthiness." There is then such a thing as spiritual self-flattery; there is such a thing as a delusive dependence, in religion: yes; "there is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death." The unhappy conclusion is drawn from innumerable sources: from pious ancestors and distinguished privileges; from ritual observances; from formal duties in which the affections are never engaged; from virtues weighed against vices; from comparisons of ourselves with others; from partial reformations; from hearing sermons; from dreams; from sudden impulses; from the casual application of promises; from orthodoxy; from terror in the conscience; from fervour in the passions; from spiritual gifts. These are only a few articles from the inventory of delusion, by which the enemy of souls, according to the character and circumstances of mankind, excites and encourages a hope which will one day cover its possessor with shame. And it sometimes happens that the same person successively occupies many of these refuges of lies: as he is expelled by conviction from one, there is another to receive him: only the continuance of his satisfaction requires, that if his knowledge increase, every fresh deception should become more subtle and specious. Thus "the strong man armed keepeth his palace;" and while this is the case, "his goods are in peace." There is a stillness in the conscience. The mind has no misgiving fears. Such characters are backward to self-examination; and wish not to have the good opinion they entertain of themselves shaken. If you lived with them, you would never find them walking mournfully before the Lord: you would never hear them complaining of their inward conflict, or hear them asking, "What must I do to be saved?"—Nothing can be more dreadful than this state: for consider only two things.

First, this confidence keeps them from looking after salvation. Were it not for this shelter, they would be induced to flee for refuge. They are too good to be saved. Hence, says our Saviour, "publicans and harlots shall enter into the kingdom of heaven before" such. Few ever pretend to vindicate vice; and a vigorous charge on the conscience of the ungodly may succeed; but no weapon can penetrate this self-righteous armour. While the man continues wrapped up in this presumption, there is no hope of his conversion; the word has no power over him. Do we exhort him to believe? HE congratulates himself that he is a believer. Do we urge him to repentance? He needs none. Do we press him to escape from the wrath to come? HE is in no danger. He applies to himself only promises and privileges to which he has no claim, and which will only serve to render the consequences of his delusion the more painful.

For, secondly, this course will terminate in woful surprise and disappointment. The foolish builder, who did not suspect the stability of the house, will learn its weakness in the storm and the ruins: the man is past all hope before he begins to fear. His mistake is discovered when it is too late to be rectified! O what confusion! O the horrors of regret and of despair!—"Strive to enter in at the strait gate; for many will seek to enter in, and shall not be able. When once the master of the house is risen up, and hath shut to the door, and ye begin to stand without, and to knock at the door, saying, Lord, Lord, open unto us; and he shall answer, and say unto you, I know you not whence you are; then shall ye begin to say, we have eaten and drunk in thy presence, and thou hast taught in our streets. But he shall say, I tell you, I know you not whence you are; depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity. There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when ye shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets, in the kingdom of heaven, and ye yourselves thrust out." My dear hearers, remember this awful caution; and since so many mistake, "let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed

lest he fall." Dare you trust your state without trying it? In a business of everlasting importance, can you be satisfied with equivocal or with slender evidence? In all other cases, will you think you can never be too sure, and this is the only one in which you are resolved never to doubt? O see that you possess that "grace which bringeth salvation." Go, and compare your character with the representations given of real Christians in the Scriptures. Go, and "learn what that meaneth—If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new."—We sometimes try to alarm you by your sin; we would alarm you, in this discourse, by your religion. The religion of many of you is likely to prove the means of your eternal ruin.

IV. Some "are at ease in Zion," from PRACTICAL INDIFFERENCE.—You would much offend persons of this class, were you to inquire whether they believed the Scripture. They read it daily: they come to God's ministers as his people come: and the preacher "is unto them as a very lovely song of one that hath a pleasant voice, and can play well on an instrument; for they hear his words, but they do them not." They are "like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass: for he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was." Nor are these persons to be charged sentimentally with Antinomianism, or any other error. They know the Gospel in theory; but they are strangers to its divine efficacy. Of all the various characters we have to deal with in our ministry, these are the most unlikely to insure success. When we endeavour to convince the ignorant, or to rouse the unthinking, we feel some hope; but as for those of you who have heard the Gospel from your infancy, or who have sat under it long enough to learn distinctly and familiarly all the truths it contains; who know every thing we can advance; who believe every thing we can prove; who can even "contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints," and rest satisfied, regardless of the influence of these things in your hearts and lives—you, you are the most likely to drive ministers to despair. We preach: you acknowledge and admire—but you discover no more concern to obtain the one thing needful we propose, than if you were persuaded we called you "to follow a cunningly devised fable." You believe there is no felicity in the creature, and that satisfaction is to be found in God only. The conviction is just: but it is completely useless; for you are "forsaking the fountain of living waters, and hewing out to yourselves broken cisterns, cisterns that can hold no water." You confess there is a hell, and that its misery is extreme; but you never take one step to avoid it. We cry, "Death is rapidly approaching you; and the Judge standeth before the door." You answer, Yes; and slumber on. Your life is a perpetual contradiction to your creed: you are not happy, and contrive not to be miserable.

O what a waste of means and privileges have you occasioned! Why did you not inform us from the beginning that you never intended to regard these things? Then we could have turned to others: you have robbed them of sermons which they would have heard to purpose, and which you have heard in vain. I need not say, you are not Christians—that you are wholly unlike them—that you do not "war a good warfare"—that you do not "run the race set before you:" for you are acquainted with all this: you do not mistake your condition; you know you are in a state of condemnation—and are still at ease!! O what a paradox are you!—Nothing can be so hateful to the Supreme Being as this state of inactivity. He would you "were either cold or hot." Since you know your Lord's will, and do it not, you will "be beaten with many stripes."—"It will be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment than for you." No instance in the Scripture is recorded of the conversion of persons in your peculiar circumstances. You are sermon-proof. A Bible has poured forth all its treasures before you: it has thrown down at your feet heaven and hell—but it has excited neither hope nor fear. Surely, you have reason to apprehend that means, so long applied in vain, will be always useless: for what probability is there that the word which has done nothing already, should prove efficacious now? Will the sword of the Spirit become keener? Will the remedy acquire more virtue to heal?

This illustration of our subject leads us to suggest the following inferences.

First, If "woe be to them that are at ease in Zion;" surely they are highly criminal, who countenance and promote such a state. Of this number are ministers, who preach so as never to give offence, or excite alarm; "saying, Peace, peace, when there is no peace."—"A wonderful and horrible thing is committed in the land: the prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests bear rule by their means; and my people love to have it so: and what will you do in the end thereof?" O how dreadful will it be in the day of judgment to hear the reproach—"There is the man that deceived me, and thereby destroyed me. There is the cursed watchman, who never announced my danger, till the enemy had secured his prize."—Of this number also are characters who will never seize an opportunity to warn a fellow-creature, or a friend, of his condition; and who will suffer a soul to perish, rather than incur a reflection, or a frown, by the exercise of faithful kindness. "Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thine heart; thou shalt in any wise rebuke thy neighbour, and not suffer sin upon him."

Secondly, If "woe be to them that are at ease in Zion," let no e be troubled when they find their connexion , distressed and alarmed with a sense of their sin and danger." "This sickness is not unto death." This pain is a sign of returning life. This "want" will make the prodigal think of home, where "there is bread enough and to spare." When people of the world see their friends and relations in spiritual anxiety, they fear approaching derangement or melancholy; they are eager to send them into company, or to order them to the theatre. But those who have been through this state of mind themselves, can rejoice while they sympathize: knowing that it is the common method of the Saviour to wound before he heals, to humble before he exalts; and hoping that this process is the preparation for that mercy which is never prized till we are made to feel our misery. Such was the disposition of the apostle—"Now I rejoice, not that ye were made sorry, but that ye sorrowed to repentance: for godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of; but the sorrow of the world worketh death."

Thirdly, If "woe be to them that are at ease in Zion," there is nothing so much to be dreaded as false security in religion. I know that there are many alarms which never issue in salvation. I know that many fear hell, who never fear sin. But still, these distressing convictions are hopeful: they produce movements which may receive a heavenly tendency: they look like the harbingers of religion: they are blossoms, if not fruit; and though they may be blighted or shaken off, we cannot help hailing them.—Some are afraid of their troubl :: we wish they were afraid of their peace They are glad when, by company or amusement, they have freed themselves from certain painful impressions; whereas this may be rather a judgment than a mercy. They rejoice, says an old divine, to get rid of a shaking ague, though it has left them in a deep decline. There is nothing so fatal as the carelessness and indifference of a man who was never distressed about sin, or deprived of one hour's rest by saying, "What have I done!" It is terrible when a man is struck with spiritual senselessness. It is better for God to ruin your estate, to bereave you of your friends, to destroy your health, than suffer you to have a "seared conscience," or a heart "hardened through the deceitfulness of sin." It would have been well, if the foolish virgins had been roused from their sleep before the midnight cry, had it been done even by the intrusion of robbers.—This induces us to be so urgent in this case; anxious if by any means to produce in you that salutary alarm which will lead you to precaution and remedy; and, by destroying the peace of sin, secure to you "the peace of God, which passeth all understanding."

Fourthly, If "woe be to them that are at ease in Zion;" there is consolation for them that are distressed, there. Nothing is more common than to find gracious souls filled with discouraging apprehensions and fears—and frequently "they refuse to be comforted." We do not admire and applaud all their doubts and their dejections; but these painful scruples are easily accounted for, and they lie on the safe side. They are very distinguishable from unbelief; and arise—1. From their view of the importance of the concern: it is nothing less than the everlasting salvation of their souls. Such a thing cannot be slightly determined: they are always suspicious; they can never have sufficient certainty; they require evidence upon evidence—"This is the only opportunity to ensure my welfare—What if I should be mistaken?" 2. From a conviction of the deceitfulness of their own hearts, which have often imposed upon them. 3. From a recollection that many live and die in their delusion—and what if they should be of the number? Thus they can hardly argue themselves into ease; and while others do not fear at all, these fear too much. While others will not perceive the saddest evidences of sin, these will hardly discern the fairest evidences of grace. Both are blameable; but they are not equally dangerous. The one loses his peace for a time; the other loses his soul for ever. It is better to have a burdened, than a benumbed conscience. It is better to be scrupulous, than licentious. They are not likely to perish, who are afraid of perishing.

But, after all, Christians, your God is concerned, not only for your safety, but for your happiness; and many advantages would arise from your spiritual joy. Jesus is "appointed unto them that mourn in Zion, to give them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness." He has promised "another Comforter, who shall abide with you for ever." He has written this Book for your "learning; that you, through patience and comfort of the Scriptures, might have hope." To his ministers he has said, "Comfort ye, comfort ye my people." O that I could now execute my commission! O that I had the tongue of the learned, and could speak a word in season to him that is weary! O that I could remove all your groundless fears and distressing jealousies! O that I could place the promises within your view, and within your reach!—"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." "Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted." "Blessed are they that do hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled." "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy."—Remember, the sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and a contrite heart, God will not despise." Remember, the dawn is the pledge and the beginning of

day. Remember, your desires are an evidence of something good, and an "assurance of something better."—"Now our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God even our Father, which hath loved us, and hath given us everlasting consolation and good hope through grace, comfort your hearts, and stablish you in every good word and work." Amen.

SERMON XI.

THE PRIVILEGES OF THE RIGHTEOUS.

For the Lord God is a sun and shield: the Lord will give grace and glory; no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly.—Psalm lxxxiv. 11.

David was remarkably distinguished by the fervency of sacred affections. He could say, with propriety, "The zeal of thy house hath eaten me up." Hence his anxiety and resolution to establish a residence for the ark: "Surely, I will not come into the tabernacle of my house, nor go up into my bed; I will not give sleep to mine eyes, or slumber to mine eyelids; until I find out a place for the Lord, an habitation for the mighty God of Jacob." Hence his peculiar distress, when deprived of public privileges: "When I remember these things, I pour out my soul in me: for I had gone with the multitude; I went with them to the house of God, with the voice of joy and praise; with a multitude that kept holy-day." When, by the unnatural rebellion of Absalom, he is driven from his throne, he feels the loss of his palace much less than the loss of the sanctuary; and the feelings of the king are absorbed in the concern of the worshipper for the ordinances of religion.

Infidels may indeed endeavour to explain this, by supposing that David was a man of a melancholy turn of mind; and that, like other weak and gloomy persons, he sought relief in devotional exercises, when he should have been engaged in forming wise counsels, and adopting vigorous measures. But let us attend to his real character. He was the hero of the age; and had immortalized his name by numerous exploits. In him were united the prowess of the soldier and the skill of the general; and a succession of the most brilliant victories had procured for him the highest confidence, as well as the highest honour. He was qualified to rule as a judge, and to govern as a politician. To all these he added the charms of poetry and music; and "the harp of the son of Jesse still continues to drive away the evil spirit." Nevertheless he passes by all these distinctions: every other exercise, every other pleasure, gives place to one: in this he centres all his happiness—"One thing have I desired of the Lord: that will I seek after: that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to inquire in his temple." "How amiable are thy tabernacles, O Lord of Hosts!" "Blessed are they that dwell in thine house; they will be still praising thee." "For a day in thy courts is better than a thousand: I had rather be a door-keeper in the house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness."—Such was the language of his decided preference. Nor was it the ebullition of enthusiasm: he speaks "the words of truth and soberness:" he gives solid reasons for his predilection. The House of God had afforded him multiplied advantages: there he had experienced Divine manifestations and influences; there he hoped to enjoy fresh communion, and renewed supplies; "for the Lord God is a Sun and a Shield: the Lord will give grace and glory; and no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly." Let us examine these words in a sense more detached and general. Let us contemplate "the Lord God" we adore in the sanctuary; let us consider what He is—"a sun and shield." What He gives—"grace and glory." What He withholds—"no good thing." And whom He regards—"them that walk uprightly."

Part I. If God, my brethren, speaks to man, He must condescend to employ human language, not divine. He has done so: and behold nature and art lending their combined powers to aid the weakness of our apprehension! Nature furnishes us with a sun, and art with a shield; and all that is implied in these images, and more than all, is God to his people.

He is a "Sun."—Who can be ignorant of the glory and importance of this luminary in the system of nature—always the same; dispelling the horrors of darkness; making our day; gladdening, fertilizing, adorning the whole creation of God?—Every thing here below is changeable and perishing. "The grass withereth; the flower thereof fadeth away." Man himself partakes of the general instability. How many empires has the sun beheld rising and falling! how many generations has it seen successively descending into the grave! how many new possessors have occupied yonder estate! how many fresh classes of labourers have toiled in yonder field—while the same sun, from the beginning, has annually called forth the produce! At this moment I feel the very sun which "beat upon the head of Jonah." While I speak, mine eye sees the very same sun which shone on "the dial of Ahaz;" and "stood still in the valley of Ajalon:" the very same sun which saw our Saviour "going about doing good;" Noah stepping forth from the ark; Adam walking in the garden of Eden! It has shone nearly six thousand years; but it is unaltered. It has been perpetually dispensing its beams. But it is

undiminished: it has blessed myriads; but it is not less able to cheer us. Kindle a thousand lamps or fires,—they will not enable you to discern the sun; the sun can only be seen by his own light. As he discovers himself, so he renders every thing else visible: by means of his rays, the volume charms us, we hail the smiling face of friendship, we pursue our callings, and shun the dangers to which we are exposed. "If any man walk in the day, he stumbleth not, because he seeth the light of this world." "The sun ariseth—man goeth forth to his work and to his labour until the evening." The illumination of the sun is progressive. The dawn is neither clear nor dark; night reluctantly resigns its sway; it struggles for a while, but by-and-by it yields: the shadows retire, the clouds disperse, the mists and fogs evaporate, before the rising orb; and the "shining light shineth more and more unto the perfect day."—And "truly the light is sweet; and a pleasant thing it is for the eyes to behold the sun." Nature smiles; the birds welcome his approach; the lark rises up, and sings as he ascends; the little lambs are sportive with the sympathy; children are eager to go abroad. How welcome is the return of the sun after the dreary hours of night, and the chilling weeks of winter! See those poor creatures, who lose its presence for several months at a time—see them, on its return, climbing to the tops of their frozen mountains, with longing eyes, straining to catch a greedy glance!—Though the sun be so immensely remote, we feel him near: what a penetration, what a potency, is there in his rays! how he warms, enlivens, fructifies! David tells us, "there is nothing hid from the heat thereof:" Moses speaks of "the precious things put forth by the sun." For, without his influences, vain would be the labour of the ox, and the skill of the husbandman. He produces the loveliness of spring, and the abundance of autumn. He "renews the face of the earth;" he decks all nature in charms.

I imagine myself abroad in the depth of winter. I look around me. All exhibits a scene of desolation: the earth is covered with snow; the rivers are sealed up with ice; the vegetable tribes are dead, and the tuneful dumb; favourite walks and beloved gardens, like friends in adversity, are abandoned by their admirers: "He sendeth abroad his ice, like morsels; who can stand before his cold?" I rush in; and after the lapse of a very few months, I come forth, and take a fresh survey. I am filled with wonder. The ground is dressed "in living green." The woods are covered with foliage, "where the birds build their nests," and indulge their songs. "The flowers appear on the earth."—What has the sun been doing? He has perfumed the rose; he has painted the tulip; he has made "the valleys to stand thick with corn, and the little hills to rejoice on every side;" "he has made all things new."

And who is not reminded by all this of One, "who is the Father of lights, with whom there is no variableness, or shadow of turning?"—And He only can be known by his own discoveries. "As it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath REVEALED them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, even the deep things of God. For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of a man which is in him? Even so, the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God."—"God is light:" he scattered "the darkness which covered the earth."—"Through the tender mercy of our God, the day-spring from on high hath visited us, to give light to them that sit in darkness, and in the shadow of death; to guide our feet into the way of peace."—"He who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." He has opened "the eyes of our understanding;" subdued our prejudices; fixed our attention; and given us a taste capable of relishing the sublime truths of his word. He "has called us out of darkness into his marvellous light."

—His people are not strangers to happiness, and they derive it all from him. The knowledge he gives them "rejoiceth the heart." He fills them "with all joy and peace, in believing." His "ways are ways of pleasantness, and all" his "paths are peace." He lifts up "the light of his countenance upon" them, and this puts "gladness into their hearts, more than" the wicked experience "when their corn and wine increase." If they have seasons which may be called their night, or their winter, they are occasioned by his absence: "He hides his face, and they are troubled: then they cry, O when wilt thou come unto me!"—Cold, languishing, dead, before; when He returns, he brings prosperity. "He works in us to will and to do:" he enlivens every duty, and actuates every grace. Quickened by his influences, our religion buds forth: we "blossom as the rose;" we are "filled with all the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ unto the glory and praise of God."

—"The beauty of the Lord our God is upon us." Even here the change which Divine grace accomplishes is truly marvellous: but we shall "see greater things than these." That soul will soon be "presented faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy." That body too shall partake of the renovation: "it is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption; it is sown in dishonour, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power; it is sown a natu-

ral body, it is raised a spiritual body."—"He will beautify the meek with salvation."—Behold the sublimest image which even the imagination of David could seize; but even this falls infinitely below the subject to which it is applied. After considering the magnitude of its body, the rapidity of its light, the force of its influence, and all the wonderful things which philosophers have told us; hear our Saviour saying, "He maketh HIS sun to rise on the evil and on the good:" and remember, it is only one of his creatures, which he made by "the breath of his mouth;" which he upholds "by the word of his power;" and which he commands with infinitely more ease than you can manage the smallest lamp: it is only one ray of his glory.—The insufficiency of all metaphor requires a variety of comparison; and hence David adds,

"The Lord God is a SHIELD." This piece of defensive armour has been made of different materials. There have been shields of leather, of wood, of iron, of brass, and some even of silver and gold. Your shield, O Christian, is DIVINE.—He, to whom "belong the shields of the earth," who lends the strongest all their strength, with whom "nothing is impossible,"—He is your shield—a shield always at hand; impenetrable by any weapon; capacious, encompassing, adequate—For what part of the Christian lies uncovered, unprotected?—His substance? "Has he not made an hedge about him; and about his house, and about all that he hath on every side?"—His reputation? "He shall hide them in the secret of his presence from the pride of man; he shall keep them secretly in a pavilion from the strife of tongues."—His body? "He keepeth all his bones; not one of them is broken."—His soul! "The Lord shall preserve thee from all evil: he shall preserve thy soul." The defence of our health and of our estate is conditional, and is decided in subserviency to our spiritual and everlasting welfare; but for the safety of the soul God has absolutely engaged: this "shall never perish." Although the enemies that conspire to destroy it are formidable and numerous, they shall all rage in vain. In the perfections, the word, the providence, the grace of God, we find ample refuge and security. O Christian! while an apprehension of exposure, and a consciousness of weakness, is every day pressing upon your mind, and urging you to draw very gloomy conclusions; remember the assurance of effectual assistance and defence: by faith, see God placing himself between you and danger; see Jehovah spreading himself all around for your protection; and fulfilling the promise, "As the mountains are high about Jerusalem, so the Lord is round about his people, from henceforth even for ever."—"For I," saith the Lord, "will be unto her a wall of fire round about, and I will be the glory in the midst of her." Ah! well may Wisdom say, "Whoso hearkeneth unto me shall dwell safely, and shall be quiet from the fear of evil." And well may you say, and "boldly" too, "the Lord is my helper." "The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The Lord is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid? Though an host should encamp against me, my heart shall not fear: though war should rise against me, in this will I be confident."

II. Such God is; and what does He GIVE? "GRACE AND GLORY."—The meaning, the importance, the dependence, the union of these blessings, deserve our attention.

And what is grace? It is the favourite word of Inspiration: and here, as in many other parts of Scripture, it intends Divine assistance and influence, springing from the free favour of God. It is often expressed plurally: we hear of the graces of the Holy Spirit: and some speak of them, as if they were so many little, separate, conscious agents, respectively stationed in the soul: whereas it is one grand agency, restoring man to the image and service of God, and operating various ways, according to the nature of the object. When it regards truth, we call it faith;—a future good, hope;—trouble, patience.

And what is glory? It denotes splendour, fame, excellency displayed; and the sacred writers apply it by way of distinction to the transcendent dignity and sublime happiness reserved in heaven for the righteous. "Thou shalt guide me by thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory."—"I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us."—"When he who is our life shall appear, then shall we also appear with him in glory."

These blessings are absolutely essential to our welfare: this the Christian acknowledges. From the beginning of his religious course, he has been convinced of the necessity of divine grace, and his conviction grows with his days. He feels himself wholly unequal to the work he has to do, the race he has to run, the warfare he has to accomplish. Nor can he live upon the grace which he has received: "his strength" must be "renewed;" he must receive "the continual supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ." From the nature of his disposition, he desires more grace; from the nature of his condition, he needs more. He wants grace to sustain him in his troubles. He wants grace to subdue his corruptions, and to sanctify his tempers. He wants grace to preserve him "in the hour of temptation." He wants grace to quicken his languid affections, "for his soul cleaveth to the dust." He wants grace to enlarge his experience, to render him useful to others, to qualify him for the various offices and relations of life, to "hold on his way," to "endure to the end;" and, oh! what grace does he want, to enable

him to say, when he looks forward, "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for thou art with me, thy rod and thy staff they comfort me!"—Rejoice, O Christian! from the throne of God you shall "obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need." The "God of all grace" invites you near; "ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full."—My grace is sufficient for thee, for my strength is made perfect in weakness."

"The Lord will give grace:" and thus the promise provides for the believer while in this world. But he is not to live here always; this is only the beginning of his existence: before him lies an opening eternity. And here the promise meets him with "everlasting consolation," and assures him of "glory." He knows that when his wanderings are ended, "he shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven;" that, after a few more painful struggles, he shall wear "the crown of life;" that, as soon as "the earthly house of this tabernacle is dissolved, he shall have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." Of this "glory" we can know but very little, till we shall hear the voice saying, "Come and see." But this circumstance wonderfully magnifies it; for what must be implied in a felicity which surpasses all description, all conception, and which is hidden rather than unfolded by all the grand imagery employed to express it!—But we have some intimations which serve to awaken our desires, to elevate our hopes, and to solace our minds, in all the difficulties of life. It is a pleasing thought, that "there remaineth a rest for the people of God;"—that "God shall wipe away all tears from our eyes;"—that "there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain;"—that we shall "join the general assembly and church of the first-born, whose names are written in heaven;"—that

> "There we shall see HIS face,
> And NEVER, NEVER SIN;"—

that he will "shew us the path of life," and bring us into "his presence, where there is fulness of joy," and to his "right hand, where there are pleasures for evermore."—"It doth not yet appear what we shall be; but THIS we know, that when he shall appear we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is."

Again: These blessings may be considered in their order. Grace stands before glory; and though God gives both, irrespective of any meritorious worthiness in the recipients, he never gives glory till he has given grace. We wish this to be observed, because the generality of people would pass to the enjoyment of glory without submitting to the laws of grace. But such a hope is false and absurd. Thus stands the purpose of God: "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God;" "Without holiness no man SHALL see the Lord;" "Except a man be born again, he CANNOT see the kingdom of God." And hence you perceive that it is not only forbidden, but impossible. Indeed if there were no law to exclude the unsanctified sinner from glory, he would necessarily remain miserable. Sin is hell. His disposition would destroy all the happiness of heaven: the service and the joy would only disgust and torment the mind. God cannot make us happy with himself, till he has made us holy like himself. "What fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?"

We may also observe the connexion of these blessings. They are inseparable: where the Lord has given grace, he will certainly give glory. And therefore, my dear hearers, the grand question is, whether you have grace? Decide this by its influences and effects, as they are marked in the Scriptures—by loathing sin; by hungering and thirsting after righteousness; by acceding to the terms of discipleship,—denying yourselves, taking up your cross, and following the Saviour; by your love to the ordinances, the word, and the people of God; by your deadness to the world, and having your conversation in heaven.—Thus ascertain the reality of your grace, and "rejoice in hope of the glory of God;" "being confident of this very thing, that he who hath begun a good work in you, will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ."—Did I say, where there is grace, there WILL be glory? I go further—there IS glory: "the Spirit of glory resteth upon them." They are "changed from glory to glory." They "rejoice with joy unspeakable, and full of glory."—"He that believeth on the Son of God, hath everlasting life." He has more than the promise—he has a part of heaven: he has "the earnest of his inheritance;" he has "the first-fruits of the Spirit"—the same in kind, though not in degree, with the whole harvest. Grace is glory in the bud, and glory is grace matured. Grace is the lowest degree of glory, and glory is only the highest degree of grace. This He gives;

III. And what does He WITHHOLD? "NO GOOD THING."—O how full and comprehensive is the language of promise! The Holy Ghost, in framing it, seems to anticipate all the objections of our suspicious hearts. It was much to tell us, God was "a sun and shield:" but he enlarges, and adds, "The Lord will give grace and glory." And surely this will suffice. No, my brethren; there is something still behind—the condition of "the life which we now live in the flesh." This frequently presses upon the mind, and perplexes, and troubles the people of God. They have bodies: they have families: they are commanded to "provide things honest in the sight of all men." Where is the man who never

thought within himself, "If I make religion my chief concern, and sacrifice whatever it requires, shall I not injure my temporal circumstances?" Where is the man, whose liberality was never checked, and whose confidence was never weakened, by slender means of subsistence! Where is the man, who, with increasing demands from a numerous offspring, never with anxiety asked, "What shall they eat, and what shall they drink; and wherewithal shall they be clothed?"—"He knoweth our frame, and remembereth that we are dust:" He stoops to our weaknesses; and saves us the pain and shame of telling him our unworthy fears, by giving us promises which effectually provide against them—"Your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things." "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you." "No good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly."—Let us take three views of this extensive promise.

First, Behold in it the grandeur of his possessions. He who engages to withhold no good thing, must HAVE all good things at his disposal. And, lo! "he is able to do for us exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think." "Thine, O Lord, is the greatness, and the power, and the glory, and the victory, and the majesty: for all that is in the heaven and in the earth is thine: thine is the kingdom, O Lord, and thou art exalted as head above all. Both riches and honour come from thee, and thou reignest over all; and in thine hand it is to make great, and to give strength unto all." "The silver and the gold are thine." "Every beast of the forest is thine, and the cattle upon a thousand hills." "The earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein"—And what is this lower world? An inconsiderable province of his empire—"Lift up your eyes on high, and behold, who hath created these things; that bringeth out their host by number: he calleth them all by names, by the greatness of his might, for that he is strong in power, not one failing." His dominion is universal; his resources boundless; his possessions infinite—Can he be poor, whose Father is so rich?

Secondly, Behold in this promise the wonders of his liberality. All earthly benefactors shrink from a comparison with him. He acts by no ordinary rule of bounty, by no human standard of beneficence. "As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are his ways higher than your ways, and his thoughts than your thoughts." "O how GREAT is the goodness which thou hast laid up for them that fear thee, which thou hast wrought for them that trust in thee before the sons of men!"—"The same Lord over all is RICH unto all that call upon him."—"My God shall supply ALL your need, according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus."—"No good thing will he withhold."

Thirdly, Behold in this promise the wisdom of his dispensations. He has qualified his engagement, and regulated our hope, by the GOODNESS of the things insured. Instead of regretting this condition, the Christian rejoices in it; it secures his happiness. Had God engaged to indulge him in all these things, whether they were good for him or evil, it would have been a threatening, not a promise. He now sees the providence of God choosing his inheritance for him, managing all his affairs, and equally designing his welfare when it gives, or when it withholds.

For there is often a great difference between what is pleasing, and what is profitable. Hence the apostle tells us, "No chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby." And David could say, "It is GOOD for me that I have been afflicted." If health, if honour, if riches will be good for us, they are secured; if indigence, if obscurity, if sickness will conduce to our advantage, they will not be denied: for "no GOOD thing" will He withhold. Of all this he is the infallible Judge. Let us then drop not only our murmuring, but our anxiety: let us "cast all our care upon Him who careth for us;" let us be satisfied that "all things work together for good to them that love God;" and ever remember the word upon which he has caused us to hope—"the young lions may lack and suffer hunger; but they that seek the Lord shall not want ANY GOOD THING." And,

IV. Whom does God regard in all these exceeding great and precious promises?—"THEM THAT WALK UPRIGHTLY." While, by this single expression, David takes down the confidence of the presumptuous, he encourages the hope of the real Christian, who, under all the imperfections which make him groan, knows that his desire is to the Lord, "and to the remembrance of his name." For the character is not sinless: he has "not attained," he is "not already perfect"—"but this one thing" he does: "forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before," he "presses toward the mark for the prize of his high calling of God in Christ Jesus." He is "an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile." His sincerity may be viewed in reference to himself; to others; and to God.

He walks uprightly, with regard to himself. In all his dealings with his own soul, he guards against self-deception and flattery. He dreads a false peace; he wishes to free his mind from every bias in his own favour, and to survey impartially his state and character. He does not shut his eyes against the evidence of offensive truth; nor hold back, or divert his un-

derstanding from those inquiries which may issue in mortifying and painful convictions. He comes to the light. He suspects, and examines himself. He reads, and compares, and judges himself again; again he investigates himself, and kneels, and prays, "Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: and see if there be any wicked way in me; and lead me in the way everlasting."

He walks uprightly, with regard to God. It is an awful consideration, that "with him we have to do" in all our religious exercises. In singing, we profess to praise him; in prayer, we profess to seek him; in hearing his word, we profess to obey him—And "God is not mocked." He distinguishes between appearance and reality. And, in the Christian indeed, there is something more than pretence: he does not "draw nigh to God with his mouth, and honour him with his lips, while his heart is far from him." He worships God in "spirit and in truth." His external service arises from inward principle. Hence he makes conscience of private duties. He is the same in his family, as in the temple. He is the same in prosperity, as in adversity. The simple and pure regard which he has to the will and the glory of God, keeps him from partiality in religion: there is no sin which he cherishes; there is no duty which he dislikes: he esteems all the divine precepts concerning all things to be right, and he hates every false way.

He walks uprightly, with regard to men. His transactions with his fellow-creatures are distinguished by candour, openness, honesty, punctuality. His professions are the sure pledges of his designs. What he promises, he performs. He does not consider his tongue as given him to deceive. He hates and abhors lying. He shuns adulation; he gives not flattering titles to any. He does not suffer sin upon his neighbour: "faithful are the wounds of" this "friend." He does not abound in ceremony: it is too deceitful an article for him to traffic with. He is not an actor on a stage: he is not a rotten sepulchre, over which stands a whitewashed tomb—He is what he appears to be.

Such is the character of the righteous: these are their privileges. "For the Lord God is a sun and shield: the Lord will give grace and glory; and no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly"—Hence we learn how exceedingly we are mistaken, if we view religion as unfriendly to our happiness. "Godliness is profitable unto all things; having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come." It is the "one thing needful;" and if we make light of it, whatever be the prize we pursue, we are "observing lying vanities, and forsaking our own mercies."—

Hence we expostulate. Can the service of sin, or the pursuits of the world, afford you advantages like these? Can earthly things, even in their abundance, heal a wounded conscience, sustain you under the troubles of life, take away the sting of death, and raise you above the dread of eternity? What have they done for you already? You have tried their efficacy—are you happy? Why will you refuse a fresh proposal, sanctioned by the experience of millions, and the success of all who have tried it? "Acquaint now thyself with Him, and be at peace; thereby good shall come unto thee." "Have the workers of iniquity no knowledge?" "Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread, and your labour for that which satisfieth not? Hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness." "Incline your ear, and come unto me; hear, and your soul shall live; and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David."—

We congratulate others. "All hail, ye highly favoured of the Lord." "Happy art thou, O Israel: who is like unto thee, O people saved by the Lord, the shield of thy help, and who is the sword of thy excellency! and thine enemies shall be found liars unto thee; and thou shalt tread upon their high places." "Blessed is the people that is in such a case! yea, happy is that people whose God is the Lord."—

"We have heard, O God, that thou hast a people upon earth distinguished by innumerable and inestimable privileges. We would not be satisfied with knowing and admiring their portion. Weary of the world, which has yielded us nothing but vanity and vexation of spirit, we would seek our inheritance among them that are sanctified by faith that is in Christ Jesus. We would take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew, saying, I will go with you, for I have heard that God is with you. I am a companion of all them that fear thee, of them that keep thy precepts. Look thou upon me, and be merciful unto me, as thou usest to do unto those that love thy name. Remember me, O Lord, with the favour that thou bearest unto thy people; O visit me with thy salvation: that I may see the good of thy chosen, that I may rejoice in the gladness of thy nation, that I may glory with thine inheritance." May God inspire us with these sentiments! Amen.

SERMON XII.

THE CONDITION OF CHRISTIANS IN THE WORLD.

I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil.—St. John, xvii. 15.

These words were spoken by our Saviour, on a very memorable occasion—an "hour"

unparalleled in the annals of time.—"Having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end." While he was with them, he had withheld no proof of his kindness and care. He gave them free access to his presence, he relieved their complaints, he removed their doubts, he bore with their infirmities. Such an intercouse of sacred friendship had endeared him to their affections, and rendered the prospect of separation inexpressibly painful.—When the venerable Samuel died, "all the Israelities were gathered together, and lamented him."—When the amiable friend of David fell "on his high places," the bleeding survivor said, "I am distressed for thee, my brother Jonathan: very pleasant hast thou been to me: thy love to me was wonderful, passing the love of women."—When Elisha beheld the reformer Elijah ascending, "He cried, My father, my father! the chariot of Israel, and the horsemen thereof."—The case of the disciples was more peculiarly afflictive; and "sorrow filled their hearts."—Our Saviour was never deprived of self-possession: in every state, he had the full command of his powers; and even in the immediate view of his tremendous sufferings, he does not forget any one circumstance that claims his attention. He thinks more of his disciples than of himself: he enters into their feelings—they were to remain behind, poor and despised: "as sheep among wolves;" as passengers in a vessel "tossed by the waves"—He will not leave them "comfortless." On the evening before his crucifixion, and a few moments before his agony, by the gate of the garden of Gethsemane, surrounded with his family, "he lifts up his eyes to heaven," and commends them into the hands of his "Father and our Father, his God and our God."

Do not say, my fellow-christians, this prayer was for the apostles—it was for them primarily, but not exclusively. Hear his own words: "Neither pray I for these ALONE, but for THEM ALSO which SHALL BELIEVE on me THROUGH THEIR WORD." Thus it extends to all the followers of our Lord in every age, in every place. He prays therefore for YOU, even for YOU; and this is his language: "I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil."

From these words the following instructions may be derived. I. IT IS THE PROVINCE OF GOD TO TAKE US OUT OF THE WORLD. II. THIS WORLD IS A PROPER SITUATION FOR THE RIGHTEOUS TO LIVE IN FOR A SEASON. III. THERE IS EVIL IN THE WORLD, TO WHICH THEY ARE EXPOSED, AND BY WHICH THEY MAY BE INJURED. IV. THE DIVINE PROTECTION IS ESSENTIAL TO THEIR SECURITY. V. IT IS ENCOURAGING TO REMEMBER THAT OUR LORD AND SAVIOUR PRAYS FOR OUR PRESERVATION.

I. IT IS THE PROVINCE OF GOD TO TAKE US OUT OF THE WORLD.

It is the obvious design of the Scripture to bring the mind into a pious frame, by inducing us to acknowledge God in all our ways; to apprehend him in every occurrence; to adore him in the field, as well as in the temple; to hold communion with him in his works as well as in his word, in his dispensations as well as in his ordinances. While our minds are perplexed and discomposed by beholding the mass of human affairs, and the perpetual fluctuations of worldly things; this blessed book lends us a principle, which when applied reduces the confusion to order; explains the mystery; and calms the inquirer. It teaches us that nothing occurs by chance; it shews us the Supreme Being superintending the whole, "seeing the end from the beginning;" "working all things after the counsel of his own will;" advancing towards the execution of purposes worthy of himself, with steady, majestic steps; never turning aside; never too precipitate; never too slow. We see Divine Providence fixing "the bounds of our habitation," and presiding over all the circumstances of our birth, and our death. In our appointed time we appear; in the places designed for us we are fixed. When we have finished our course, and ended our work, "he says, Return, ye children of men:" and it is not in the power of enemies to accelerate, or of friends to retard the period of our departure. "Is there not an appointed time to man upon earth? Are not his days also like the days of an hireling?"—"His days are determined: the number of his months are with thee: thou hast appointed his bounds that he cannot pass."—"In his hand thy breath is, and his are all thy ways." "The righteous and the wise, and their works, are in the hand of God." Does he "number the hairs of your head," and not the years of your pilgrimage? Does "not a sparrow fall to the ground without your heavenly Father?" and are ye not "of more value than many sparrows?"

This world, we have reason to believe, was never designed fully to accomplish the purpose of God in the original creation of man. It was to precede a nobler state; and the mode of transition from glory to glory, would have been easy and delightful. But the passage is now become rough and dismaying. "By one man sin entered into the world, and DEATH by sin; and so death hath passed upon all men, because all have sinned." It is not pleasing to human nature, to think of being "taken out of" these bodies in which we have tabernacled; "out of" these houses in which we have lived; "out of" these circles in which we have moved; "out of" this "world," in which we were born, and to which we have been so long accustomed—to be laid hold of, and detached from all we now enjoy, by the

messengers of "the king of terrors;" to be divided; to lie down and putrify; to enter a new and untried world. But irksome as the consideration may be, the Christian cannot banish it from his thoughts: he endeavours, especially in particular circumstances, to render it familiar; and there are things which have a tendency to encourage his mind in the contemplation of it.—The enemy is disarmed of his sting. While "walking through the valley of the shadow of death," God will be with him.—The event is entirely under the controling influence of his heavenly Father. How pleasing is the reflection, "Well; my times are in his hand. On him depend the occurrences of my history, and the duration of my life. He is best qualified to judge of the scenes through which I am to pass, and of the manner in which I am to leave this world—whether it be sudden, or lingering; by accident, or disease; alone, or surrounded with friends; in youth, or in age.—It is the Lord; let him do what seemeth him good. Have I been bereaved of beloved relations, and useful connexions?—My soul hath it still in remembrance—but were they not his? He had a right to do what he would with his own. He came and took them away, not as a thief, but as a proprietor. He employed in the seizure not only power, but wisdom and kindness. What I know not now, I shall know hereafter. Behold, he taketh away; who can hinder him? Who will say unto him, What doest thou? I was dumb, I opened not my mouth, because thou didst it. He is the rock, his work is perfect; for all his ways are judgment: a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is he."

II. This world is a proper situation for the disciples of Jesus to continue in for a season.—It is probable, that if our weak reason were allowed to speculate concerning the state of the righteous, it would decide on the propriety of raising them to the high places of the earth; of delivering them from all tribulation; of withholding from them no joy—or rather, of calling them away from this region of sin, from this vale of tears, from this miserable exile, to "sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven." The Scripture seems to countenance this notion. It says, "Arise ye, and depart; for this is not your rest, because it is polluted." It commands us "not to be unequally yoked together with unbelievers." It asks, "What fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? And what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? Or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel?" How perfectly has the Creator arranged every thing in the universe! How wisely has he separated the day and the night, the dry land and the sea, the various classes of beasts and birds! And will he join the living and the dead? Will he mingle error and truth? virtue and vice? Will he confound the pious with the wicked? Yes; this world, so opposite to their heavenly nature, so unsuitable to their desires, so incapable of affording them happiness, while from every quarter it wounds and vexes; forcing from them many a sigh, "Woe is me, that I sojourn in Mesech!" "O that I had wings like a dove! for then I would fly away, and be at rest; I would hasten my escape from the stormy wind and tempest"—this world is to retain them year after year; and our Saviour does not pray to take them out of it.

First, From their remaining here, the wicked derive innumerable advantages. They have instances of religion before them, which encourage while they condemn. By these they learn that godliness is practicable, and profitable. They see persons of the same passions, of the same age, of the same occupations with themselves, walking in the paths of righteousness; and, much oftener than we imagine, the portion of the righteous forming a contrast with their own unhappy circumstances, leads them to exclaim, "How goodly are thy tents, O Jacob! and thy tabernacles, O Israel! Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his." It is in the very nature of religion to render Christians active in doing good. They are often the means of "saving a soul from death, and of hiding a multitude of sins." Sometimes a few individuals have changed the moral face of a whole neighbourhood; and the language of prophecy has been realized—"the wilderness and the solitary place shall be made glad for them, and the desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose."

The disorders which prevail in the world are great; but the state of society would be far worse, not to say intolerable, were the righteous to be withdrawn, and the licentiousness of sinners to be no longer repressed, or counteracted by their rebuke, their example, and their influence. They "are the salt of the earth;" they are "the light of the world." They are blessings in the families, cities, countries, in which they reside. They have frequently, by their prayers, obtained deliverances for those among whom they live. They have "stood in the breach," and held back the invading judgments of the Almighty. "Except the Lord of Hosts had left unto us a very small remnant, we should have been as Sodom, and we should have been like unto Gomorrah." While a father sees his children standing intermixed with his foes, he levels not his arrows: the one is preserved for the sake of the other. When God has secured his people, the wicked become the fair mark of his indignation; the vials of his wrath are poured down; time shall be no longer; the heavens pass away with a great noise; the earth is burned up.

Again: Some reasons are taken from

Christians themselves. "We know that all things work together for good to them that love God:" and does not their situation in the world call forth every active, every suffering virtue? Can there be any grandeur of character, where there are no difficulties and dangers? Can there be a triumph where there is no warfare, or a warfare where there is no enemy? when do the righteous feel motives to keep them humble? When they behold in the wicked an image of themselves. When are they urged to gratitude for distinguishing grace! When they are reminded by sinners of what they were "by nature" as well "as others." When do they display their compassion, and increase their benevolence? While feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, teaching the ignorant, and endeavouring to rescue their fellow-creatures from perdition. Can they exercise divine patience and forgiveness? Yes, while they have an opportunity to "render good for evil."

They can discover their holy courage, while bearing the "reproach of the cross," and enduring "the defaming of many." Here, by the sacrifices they are called to make, and their readiness to leave father or mother, son or daughter, lands or life, for his sake, they demonstrate the supremacy of their love to the Saviour. Here, their sincerity and resolution appear unsuspicious, by not drawing back, or turning aside, when the world would terrify by its frowns, or allure by its smiles. Here we behold the vigour of those principles which bear sway in the minds of the godly.—In heaven we shall glorify God. But heaven is not a state of trial. There sin never enters: and what is it to live innocent where there is no temptation? But to see evil patterns, and not copy them; to breathe pestilential air, and not inhale the infection; to renounce our inclinations, and say, "Thy will be done;" to live with our conversation in heaven, when every thing conspires to bind us down to earth —here the Christian honours God, and here he gathers glory in a manner the most distinguishing—and all this is peculiar to his residence in this world.

Let him therefore avail himself of the singular opportunities his situation affords; and while he remains here, let him labour to fulfil the design of Heaven in his continuance, both with regard to himself and others. Let him remember, that all rash and eager wishes for death are improper; that it may be "needful for him to abide" longer "in the flesh;" that of this expediency he must leave God to judge; that His pleasure will be discovered by the event; that he will not be detained a moment longer than is necessary to accomplish some valuable purpose; that, instead of indulging in impatience, it becomes him to say, with Job, "All the days of my appointed time will I wait until my change come." The man in harvest, while bearing "the burden and heat of the day," may occasionally look up to see where the sun is; and may console himself with the reflection, "The evening shades will by-and-by come on, and invite me to an honourable retreat"—but it does not become him to throw down his implements, and hasten home before he obtains such a discharge.

As Christians are to think of living for a while in the world, it is not unreasonable for them to be affected with its occurrences and changes. Some plead for a kind of abstracted and sublimated devotion, which the circumstances they are placed in by their Creator render equally impracticable and absurd.—They are never to notice the affairs of government, or the measures of administration: war, or peace; liberty, or slavery; plenty, or scarcity—all is to be equally indifferent to them; they are to leave these carnal and worldly things to others. But have they not bodies? Have they not families? Is religion founded on the ruins of humanity? When a man becomes a Christian, does he cease to be a member of civil society? Allowing that he be not the owner of the ship, but only a passenger in it, has he nothing to awaken his concern in the voyage? If he be only a traveller towards a better country, is he to be told, that because he is at an inn which he is soon to leave, it should not excite any emotion in him, whether it be invaded by robbers, or consumed by flames before the morning? "In the peace thereof ye shall have peace:"—and are not Christians to "provide things honest in the sight of all men?" Are they to detach themselves while here from the interests of their fellow-creatures; or to "rejoice with them that rejoice, and weep with them that weep?" Is not religion variously affected by public transactions? Can a Christian, for instance, be indifferent to the cause of freedom, even on a pious principle? Does not civil liberty necessarily include religious? and is it not necessary to the exertions of ministers, and the spreading of the Gospel?

And, Christians, as the world is a station in which you are to reside for a season, religion does not require you to withdraw from society, to relinquish secular business, to live in solitude. It more than justifies your being visible, social, active. "Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel: but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven." It becomes you, however, to remember,

III. THAT THERE IS EVIL IN THE WORLD, TO WHICH YOU ARE EXPOSED, AND BY WHICH YOU MAY BE INJURED. And what is this "evil?" There is the evil of sin, and the evil of suffering. It is not the latter that our Saviour deprecates—"If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his

cross." "In the world ye shall have tribulation." "Blessed are they who are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." Indigence and affliction are generally a soil favourable to the prosperity of religion. "By the sadness of the countenance, the heart is made better." Security from sin is preferable to immunity from sorrow. It is therefore MORAL evil from which we should be most anxious to be preserved. And by this you are perpetually endangered while in the world.

The people of the world are enemies to religion. How pernicious are their maxims, their errors, their number, their example, their influence! How ensnaring are their smiles, and how intimidating their frowns! How powerful are the fear of censure, and the love of praise! The things of the world are prejudicial to a life of godliness. Every station, every condition, hides innumerable temptations. It has been questioned, whether prosperity or adversity be the more hazardous. Affluence flatters our pride, and nourishes the passions. It has a tendency to draw off our dependence from Divine Providence. It furnishes us with substitutes for the consolations of the Gospel; and as to its duties, it multiplies diversions, excuses, and hindrances. Many a man has parted with his religion in walking from a cottage to a mansion. "They that will be rich, fall into temptation, and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is the root of ALL EVIL: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows."

But indigence has its perils; hence the prayer of wisdom has always been, "Give me neither poverty nor riches; feed me with food convenient for me: lest I be full, and deny thee, and say, Who is the Lord? or lest I be poor, and steal, and take the name of my God in vain." Sensible things press upon the body, and the body affects the mind. The world has the advantage of neighbourhood and constant intercourse. It presents itself to the eye, the ear, the touch. It corresponds with a party within, which excites us to welcome every proposal it brings. The world does not ask us to deny, but to please ourselves; not to row against the current, but to sit down in the boat, and leave it to the stream. When the world knocks, "the spirit of the world" is ready to open: and when temptations to vanity meet with vain hearts, and temptations to folly meet with foolish hearts, the success is more than probable. In the seduction of mankind, the world has a marvellous diversity of means: every disposition is suited with an object. If a man be not grovelling enough to be fond of money, here is honour to allure him: if he spurn sensual gratifications, he may pursue "the knowledge which puffeth up." And as it is said of Joab, that "he had turned after Adonijah, though he turned not after Absalom;" so a man who has vanquished one temptation, may be overcome by another, more suitable to his propensity, and more aided by circumstances. O what spoils of truth, of conscience, and of devotion can the world display! In how many has it had the unhappy influence to counteract conviction, and to destroy the most promising beginnings of seriousness! Hence the apostacy of Demas—"he loved this present world"—"Felix trembled," but "willing to show the Jews a pleasure, left Paul bound."—"Herod heard John gladly, and did many wonderful things;" but the charms of a beloved Herodias obtained an order for his execution. The young man inquired after eternal life, and our Saviour "loved him;" but "he went away sorrowful, for he was very rich"—"He also that received seed among thorns, is he that heareth the word; and the cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, choke the word, and it becometh unfruitful."

—And where the world does not acquire such a predominancy in the soul as to be entirely subversive of religion, it may prevail to such a degree as to be very injurious to it. A real Christian may have too keen a relish for the allowed indulgences of life. He may be too much alive to the opinion of his fellow-worms. He may be too eager to "add house to house, and to join field to field." He may "load himself with thick clay," and go on heavily. He may "touch the unclean thing," soil "the fine linen which is the righteousness of the saints," and wear a "garment spotted by the flesh." He may spread earth over his affections, and damp their ardour. As the consequence of all this worldly influence, there will be little spirituality in his conversation; little life in ordinances; little pleasure in drawing near to God; a loss of inward peace; corroding care; a dread of affliction; a thorny dying pillow. He will be a stumbling-block to the weak, and a distress to the strong: nor will his religion stand forth prominently enough to be visible and striking "to them that are without."

Christians! there are two things which we wish you to remember. The one is, that your greatest danger lies in things lawful; for the proposal of any thing apparently sinful would awaken your fears, and your fears would secure you. "Every creature of God is good;" but if it be not "sanctified by the word of God and prayer," the blessing may be turned into a curse, and our very "table may become a snare and a trap." We are even bound to love our connexions: but love may grow up into idolatry. Extremes are contiguous. The line of separation between lawful and unlawful is a single hair: on this the enemy takes his station, in order that, when

he finds us advancing to the verge of permission, to draw us over, and induce us to transgress. The other is, that this evil frequently advances by slow degrees; approaches the heart by imperceptible access; and, by specious pretensions, justifies its continuance there. It assumes a thousand flexible shapes; wears various names; passes under the notion of good breeding, sociability, opportunities of usefulness, "laying up for the children"—"With her much fair speech she causes him to yield; with the flattery of her lips she forces him—he goeth after her straightway, as an ox goeth to the slaughter, or as a fool to the correction of the stocks: till a dart strike through his liver; as a bird hasteth to the snare, and knoweth not that it is for his life."—What is the conclusion of all this! O professors of religion, "love not the world, nor the things of the world." "Be not conformed to this world." Consider it as an enemy. Regard it with caution. Walk as among snares. Be circumspect. Be watchful. And if you would pass through the world with safety, recollect,

IV. That the divine protection is essential to your security. The more valuable things are, the more dependent will they be found. Sheep require more care than wolves; vines, than brambles. A garden demands more attention than a wilderness; and children are reared with far greater solicitude than animal young. Nothing equals the dependence of the Christian: but herein lie all his spiritual resources; for when he "is weak, then he is strong." When in himself he can do nothing, he forms an alliance with Omnipotence, and can do all things.

—Be sensible of your inability to sustain and defend yourselves. Bring under your review all those who, possessing every advantage, have drawn back unto perdition. They advanced far, and promised well; but, like a stone urged up the side of a hill, which, when the impelling force is removed, rushes back with greater velocity, and bounds further into the plain below; so these have entered again into the world, and are more distinguished by its vices and follies than before. "For if, after they have escaped the pollutions of the world, through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome; the latter end is worse than the beginning." Mark the falls of good men themselves, who have been "recovered from the snare of the devil." When they went forth, but not "in the strength of the Lord," they were found unequal to the trial, and by bitter experience were convinced of their weakness. When our Saviour had informed the disciples, that "the Shepherd would be smitten, and the sheep scattered abroad;" Peter said, "Though all men should be offended because of thee, I will never be offended." When our Lord gave him the premonition, "Before the cock crow twice, thou shalt deny me thrice;" he exclaimed, "Though I should die with thee, yet will I not deny thee." He was sincere, but self-confident. And what was the consequence? His resolution failed him: he denied his Lord with "oaths and curses." Weigh well the language of One who knows what is in man, and who has said, "Without me, ye can do nothing." Compare your experience with it. And, painful as it will be, call to your remembrance the numerous variations, instabilities, declensions, backslidings of your lives.

—Be equally persuaded, also, that the Divine power is as adequate, as it is necessary to your preservation. "Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall. But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings, as eagles; they shall run and not be weary, and they shall walk and not faint." It is his character, and his prerogative, that "He is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy." He preserved Abijah in the wicked family of Jeroboam. He secured "saints even in Cæsar's household." Behold yonder illustrious "multitude standing before the throne, with palms in their hands." Full of weakness, they passed through a world of danger: their sufficiency was of God. He enabled them "to hold on their way, and to wax stronger and stronger." He "girded them with strength, and made their way perfect." By "Him, they ran through a troop, and leaped over a wall." By Him, they "trod on the lion and adder: the young lion and the dragon they trampled under feet." And He is the same. His "hand is not shortened that it cannot save, nor his ear heavy that it cannot hear." "The Lord redeemeth the soul of his servants; and none of them that trust in him shall be desolate."

As the Divine protection is necessary, and adequate to your defence, so it is attainable; and the

Last division of our subject shews us how it is to be obtained—By prayer. "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you." Hence the practice of the saints—"Set a watch, O Lord, upon my lips; keep the door of my mouth." "Hold thou me up, and I shall be safe." "Order my steps in thy word: and let not any iniquity have dominion over me." "Uphold me, according to thy word, that I may live: and let me not be ashamed of my hope." "Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil."

Christians, however, are sensible of the imperfections of their own performances. They can scarcely call their weak efforts, prayer. "Like a crane, or a swallow, so did I chatter." "Could I see an inspired record of all

my prayers—could I see as God does the manner in which I have always addressed him—The vain thoughts! The numberless distractions! How often I have asked amiss! Sometimes without ardour, sometimes without confidence"———Hence it is a pleasing relief to their minds, to know that their brethren pray for them; that God is daily hearing, from lips more devout than their own, "Do good, O Lord, unto those that be good, and to them that are upright in their hearts." "Let all those that seek thee, rejoice and be glad in thee: let such as love thy salvation, say continually, The Lord be magnified." Is my character here described? How pleasing is it to reflect, that I am peculiarly interested in the daily supplications of all the people of God; and that "the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much!"

But their chief consolation is derived from a higher source. "And another angel came, and stood at the altar, having a golden censer: and there was given unto him much incense; that he should offer it with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar, which was before the throne. And the smoke of the incense which came with the prayers of the saints, ascended up before God, out of the angel's hand." Thus Jesus perfumes and presents our services; thus he obtains for our supplications audience and acceptance. Whether the intercession of our High Priest in heaven be verbal, or mental only, it is not necessary for us to determine. We know it is real. We know that "He appears in the presence of God for us." We know that having been "reconciled by his death, we shall be saved by his life." We know that "He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them."

It may be necessary, however, to caution you not to mistake the nature and design of his intercession. It is not to inform God, as if he were ignorant. It is not to remind him, as if he were forgetful. It is not to persuade him, as if he were unkind. The appointment is entirely his own. It sprang from his mercy, and exemplifies his wisdom. What a display have we here of the majesty and holiness of God, that he will not suffer us to approach him without a Mediator! How powerfully does it convince us of our unworthiness and vileness! How loudly does it preach to us reverence and humility! What becomes of self-righteousness, if we can bring nothing deserving the Divine regards; if our best duties need forgiveness, rather than recompense; if "the iniquity of our most holy things" would be sufficient to destroy all our confidence? But, O how it meets the fears of the returning sinner, and the discouragements of the dejected saint! "We have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of Him." If this dispensation were not designedly typified, it is beautifully illustrated in the address of God "to Eliphaz, and his two friends"—"You have not spoken of me the thing that is right. Therefore take unto you now seven bullocks, and seven rams, and go to my servant Job, and offer up for yourselves a burnt-offering—and my servant Job shall pray for you; for him will I accept: lest I deal with you after your folly."

We conclude by observing, what a view this gives us of our Lord and Saviour. What an infinitely important station does he occupy! What an understanding must he possess, to be accurately acquainted with the diversified circumstances and necessities of all the redeemed! How unparalleled is that love, which knows no variableness; which renders him, not only in his lowest abasement, but in his highest dignity, the friend of sinners; which induces him, while surrounded by all the adorations of heaven, to listen to the complaints and petitions of each of his people upon earth; and which never suffers him for one moment to remit the kindness of his attentions!

Again: what a representation does the subject give us of the happiness of believers! Though their Saviour be "passed into the heavens," they know that he has not dropped his concern for them: they know that they "have not an High Priest, who cannot be touched with the feeling of their infirmities." —And what is the inference? "Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need." "Having such an High Priest over the house of God, let us draw near in full assurance of faith." Let us contemplate our glorious Intercessor. Let us remember the dignity of his nature—he "is the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of his person." Let us remember the dearness of his character—"This," says the Father, "is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." "Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession." Let us remember the value of his atonement—he is more than an intercessor, he is "an advocate with the Father;" "he is the propitiation for our sins." He could say, "I have glorified thee on the earth; I have finished the work which thou hast given me to do: and now, Father, glorify me." "He entered heaven with his own blood, having obtained eternal redemption for us." His sufferings and death, his obedience and righteousness, all plead our cause: he asks nothing which God had not suspended on a condition which he has already performed. And in consequence of all this, let us remember the certainty of his success—"I know that thou hearest me always."

—Come then, Christians, and "rejoice with joy unspeakable, and full of glory." You

have a Friend in court; an elder brother in the palace of the King of kings. In his all-prevailing name you may approach; and while blushing over your poor services, you may be assured that your prayers will be heard, that your strength shall be equal to your day, that your grace shall be crowned with glory, and that "no good thing shall be withholden from you." While Zechariah was burning incense within, all the people were praying without. O pleasing emblem of Christians, and of "the High Priest of their profession!" While you are praying in the outer court of this world, he is "within the vail," with "the blood of sprinkling," and the censer. It was the happiness of the Israelites, while fighting in the plain below, to look up and see Moses pleading with God for them on the hill.—Be not dismayed, ye seed of Jacob. "Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth: who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea, rather, that is risen again; who is even at the right hand of God; who also maketh intercession for us."—"Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

SERMON XIII.

CONCUPISCENCE PUNISHED.

And there went forth a wind from the Lord, and brought quails from the sea, and let them fall by the camp, as it were a day's journey on this side, and as it were a day's journey on the other side, round about the camp, and as it were two cubits high upon the face of the earth. And the people stood up all that day, and all that night, and all the next day, and they gathered the quails: he that gathered least gathered ten homers: and they spread them all abroad for themselves, round about the camp. And while the flesh was yet between their teeth, ere it was chewed, the wrath of the Lord was kindled against the people; and the Lord smote the people with a very great plague. And he called the name of that place Kibroth-hattaavah; because there they buried the people that lusted.—Numbers xi. 31—34.

It is one design of the sacred Scriptures to make "sin appear exceeding sinful." Sometimes they place the evil before us in its essential deformity and vileness. At other times, they surround it with "the terrors of the Almighty," drawn from those dreadful threatenings which justify all our fears. To confirm these declarations, and illustrate these motives, we have also given us numerous examples, in which we see the malignity of sin realized "Let no man say, when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil; neither tempteth he any man. But every man is tempted when he is drawn away of his lust and enticed: then, when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin; and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death."

The event which is to engage our present attention is singularly awful. We do not wonder that God, who esteems the prayer of the wicked an abomination, should refuse their unreasonable cry. But when we see him working a miracle to gratify their wishes, and making his bounty the means of their destruction, we are compelled to exclaim, "How unsearchable are his judgments; and his ways are past finding out!"

The Israelites had been for some time preternaturally fed with manna. At length they despise it, and, influenced by the multitude of strangers that was among them, fall a lusting. "They wept again," and said, "Who shall give us flesh to eat? We remember the fish which we did eat in Egypt freely: the cucumbers and the melons, the leeks, and the onions, and the garlick: but now our soul is dried away; there is nothing at all besides this manna before our eyes." The Lord hearkened and heard. He promised to indulge them: and behold the dreadful accomplishment of his word! "And there went forth a wind from the Lord, and brought quails from the sea, and let them fall by the camp, as it were a day's journey on this side, and as it were a day's journey on the other side, round about the camp, and as it were two cubits high upon the face of the earth. And the people stood up all that day, and all that night, and all the next day, and they gathered the quails: he that gathered least gathered ten homers; and they spread them all abroad for themselves round about the camp. And while the flesh was yet between their teeth, ere it was chewed, the wrath of the Lord was kindled against the people; and the Lord smote the people with a very great plague. And he called the name of that place Kibroth-hattaavah; because there they buried the people that lusted." But, alas! though the fathers were buried, their children survived; and there are many among Christians now, as well as among the Jews of old, upon whose tombs KIBROTH-HATTAAVAH may be inscribed, with a translation under, THE GRAVES OF LUSTS. Let us approach these sepulchres, and receive instruction.

I. LET US REMARK THE POWER AND DOMINION OF GOD. Every element, every creature is subject to his authority, and yields to his control. He holds "the wind in his fist:" he determines the quarter from which it blows; the time of its rising and of its falling; the degree of its influence; the quality of its effects. "Every living thing" stands before

nim, and ministers unto him: he says to one, "Go, and he goeth; to another, come, and he cometh." He speaks—and the fowls of the air and the beasts of the field repair to Adam for names, to Noah for shelter. Has he enemies? Where can they hide? how can they escape? Every place is a magazine of arms; every being becomes an executioner, from an angel to a fly. Has he friends? He can never want instruments to deliver or relieve them. A fish supplies Peter with the sacred tribute. Lions refuse to touch Daniel. Ravens feed Elijah. He nods, and the sea divides, the rock pours out water, manna drops from the clouds.—"And there went forth a wind from the Lord, and brought quails from the sea, and let them fall by the camp, as it were a day's journey on this side, and as it were a day's journey on the other side, round about the camp, and as it were about two cubits high upon the face of the earth." The Israelites were unbelieving; they questioned his ability to supply them—they said, "Can God furnish a table in the wilderness? Behold, He smote the rock, and the waters gushed out, and the streams overflowed; can he give bread also, can he provide flesh for his people?"—Even Moses staggered through unbelief. "The people among whom I am, are six hundred thousand footmen; and thou hast said, I will give them flesh, that they may eat a whole month. Shall the flocks and herds be slain for them, to suffice them? or shall all the fish in the sea be gathered together for them, to suffice them? And the Lord said unto Moses, Is the Lord's hand waxed short? Thou shalt see now whether my word shall come to pass unto thee or not." Christian! why dost thou limit "the Holy One of Israel?" Why does thy confidence tremble when difficulties multiply, and ordinary means of relief fail thee? "Hast thou not known, hast thou not heard, that the everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary?" Behold in Him, whose you are and whom you serve, boundless resources at the command of friendly sympathy and fatherly care. "To him belong the issues from death." "The silver and the gold are his." "His are the cattle upon a thousand hills." "The earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein." "O fear the Lord, ye his saints; for there is no want to them that fear him: the young lions may lack and suffer hunger, but they that seek the Lord shall not want any good thing."

II. See how much more diligent men are in collecting the meat that perisheth, than in labouring for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life. "And the people stood up all that day, and all that night, and all the next day, and gathered the quails: he that gathered least gathered ten homers: and they spread them all abroad for themselves round about the camp." What eagerness, what assiduity, what perseverance, what sacrifices of ease, and even of sleep, do we here discover!—"This is our opportunity; this may not continue; this may never return." "The children of this world are wiser in their generation than the children of light." The wants of nature are pressing, and knock till they are relieved; but spiritual necessities are either unknown, or disregarded. When the body is in danger, we are alarmed, and instantly inquire for means of safety: but, inattentive to the exposure of the soul, who asks for the "Balm of Gilead? for the Physician there?" We are quicksighted in the affairs of time; but O what stupidity blinds us as to the concerns of eternity! If there be a prospect of improving our secular advantage, we need no arguments: a hint excites us; we are awake; we rise early, sit up late, eat the bread of carefulness: we form our plans; we lay hold of every accidental assistance; we compass sea and land. But when we are to obtain "the honour that cometh from God," to gain a seat "in heavenly places," to secure "the true riches"—we are all torpor, and forgetfulness. Here we need line upon line, precept upon precept. Sabbaths must be instituted, to impress us; ministers must be appointed, to stir up our minds by way of remembrance; conscience must be deputed, to live within us as a constant monitor—and where is our assiduity and application, after all? Who sees us "working out our salvation with fear and trembling?" "striving to enter in at the strait gate?" "pressing into the kingdom of God?" "giving all diligence to make our calling and election sure?"

III. Persons may gather and hoard up what they will never live to enjoy. See these men. They are anxious to lay in a stock for days and weeks to come. They accordingly provide it, and prepare it.—But would they have been so active, so eager, so grasping, had they foreseen that they were immediately to leave their abundance, and that as soon as they tasted they were to die? But so it was—"And while the flesh was yet between their teeth, ere it was chewed, the wrath of the Lord was kindled against the people, and the Lord smote the people with a very great plague."—By many considerations, my brethren, do we labour to quench your undue ardours in the chace of earthly things. We have often laid before you the Divine prohibitions. We have shewn you how impossible it is "to serve God and Mammon." We have proved that "a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things that he possesses; that nature is satisfied with little, and grace with less.—And, after all this, are you torn with anxieties, and wearying yourselves in worldly pursuits? Take another view—contemplate the vanity, the brevity, the uncertainty of life, upon the

continuance of which all depends. "Go to now, ye that say, To-day or to-morrow we will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell, and get gain: whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away." "And he thought within himself, saying, What shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow my fruits? and he said, this will I do: I will pull down my barns, and build greater; and there will I bestow all my goods. And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry. But God said unto him, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be which thou hast provided?" "There is one alone, and there is not a second; yea, he hath neither child nor brother: yet is there no end of all his labour; neither is his eye satisfied with riches; neither saith he, For whom do I labour, and bereave my soul of good? This is also vanity." "Surely every man walketh in a vain shew; surely they are disquieted in vain: he heapeth up riches, and knoweth not who shall gather them." "In the fulness of his sufficiency, he shall be in straits: every hand of the wicked shall come upon him. When he is about to fill his belly, God shall cast the fury of his wrath upon him, and shall rain it upon him while he is eating."

Have you read this in the Bible only? Is it there alone that human life is reduced to a span, a tale, a dream, a nothing?—Whom have you followed down to the grave? Who are perpetually falling around you? The aged and the infirm?—Who has promised you length of days? Who has engaged to secure you from disasters and disease, till you have reached your aim? And what is the tenure of your possession, when the envied prize is acquired? Does the honour wither as we gather it? Do we come to an estate, only to bequeath it? Do we lay out so much for a mansion which hangs on one dying life, and when we know the Lord of the manor will not allow us to renew? Shall we purchase at a great price articles which death has appraised and pronounced to be injured and nearly unserviceable? As strangers and pilgrims, shall we take a world of pains to beautify and enrich an inn which accommodates us only for a night, when in the morning we are to go on our way—a way by which we shall never return?—"Lord, teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom.

IV. IT IS NOT THE REFUSAL, BUT THE GRATIFICATION OF OUR DESIRES THAT OFTEN PROVES RUINOUS. God was provoked—And how does he shew his anger and punish the offenders? By indulgence—Ah! well had it been for Israel if God had turned away his ear from their clamour, and they had never seen a quail—Poor harmless birds! you unknowingly carry along the curse of Heaven. Deluded suppliants! You hail their approach: but you are filling your laps with poison—and plague—and death! Rachel said, "Give me children, or else I die"—She had children and died. The Jews were impatient for a king—and says God, "I gave them a king in mine anger, and took him away in my wrath." "Who knoweth what is good for man in this life, all the days of his vain life which he spendeth as a shadow?" Connections passionately sought may prove "scourges in your sides, and thorns in your eyes." A well-spread table may be made a snare, and a trap, and a stumblingblock, and a recompense." Your prosperity may destroy you. "They that will be rich fall into temptation, and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition."

When men are intemperate in their desires after worldly things, and succeed in obtaining what Divine Providence, from a knowledge of its consequences, was willing to withhold—the displeasure of God comes along with their unhallowed successes; and it matters not in what way the curse is inflicted—whether more visibly or secretly—whether by miracle, or by the natural influence of events on their depravity.

Sometimes the things so eagerly lusted after prove injurious to HEALTH. Thus a man is enabled to resign business—but he becomes gloomy and melancholy. He lives more sumptuously, and deliciously—but diseases, to which he was once a stranger, spring from repletion and indulgence, and becloud his future days.

Sometimes SATISFACTION IS TAKEN OUT OF THESE THINGS, and the man is far less happy than he was before he had gained them. His wishes multiply more than his means: his successes pamper every principle unfavourable to internal repose. "He that loveth silver shall not be satisfied with silver; nor he that loveth abundance, with increase." "There is an evil which I have seen under the sun, and it is common among men: a man, to whom God hath given riches, wealth, and honour, so that he wanteth nothing for his soul of all that he desireth; yet God giveth him not power to eat thereof."

Things so coveted have often proved MORALLY INJURIOUS. They have been oil, to feed the flame of those evil passions which ought to be extinguished. They have proved rain and sunshine, to call forth and ripen a thousand seeds of temptation, which were buried under ground. By these, the character has not only been developed, but formed. The man has changed with his condition; and has become the monster he once abhorred.—"He gave them their hearts' desire,

but sent leanness into their souls."—And is this a matter of congratulation? Can that be a blessing which injures your chief welfare, and destroys the prosperity of the SOUL? Are you strangers to that spirituality of frame which you once discovered? Are you chilled in your holy affections? Are you become only formal worshippers? Are you deprived of the joy of God's salvation? Is your conversation less in heaven? Do you mind earthly things? Are you more unwilling to leave this world, and enter a better?—And are you gainers—because, with the sacrifice of all these religious advantages, you have risen in life, and increased in affluence?

Many professors of religion, not satisfied with the state in which God has placed them, greedily desire more—and upon what principle? Not their necessities; but their lusts. It is not a house they want: this they have already—but a mansion. It is not food and raiment they want: these are provided—but superfluities. It is not an ability to travel they want: they have strength and feet already—but it is a carriage. They wish to be idle, luxurious, splendid, superior to others. He enlarges their resources: he indulges them—indulges their indolence, their pride, their arrogance, their carnality, their forgetfulness of God—and what is such an indulgence?—what is it for Providence to feed our sin? to give us permission to go astray? and, instead of hedging up our way with thorns, to render it alluring and seducing, by scattering it all along with flowers?

Men and brethren, the reflection is no less edifying than lawful.

It shews us, First, How impossible it is to determine the love or anger of God from external circumstances. Behold the rich man clothed in purple and fine linen, and faring sumptuously every day. See Lazarus laid at his gate full of sores, and desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from his table. But the former is the enemy, and the latter the friend of God: long ago the one has been comforted, and the other tormented—and there were the same dispositions in God towards them when they were upon earth. There is nothing concerning which we are more liable to err, than worldly success. It depends so entirely upon God, and it is so flattering to our feelings, that we can scarcely persuade ourselves that it is ever an unfavourable omen. But this is not unfrequently the case. It is sometimes sent in anger: and we should labour to ascertain the principle from which it is given. A natural man regards only the effect, but the Christian looks to the Source. A stranger would prefer the flower of a plant to the root, but the gardener who owns it values the root more than the flower. Oh! it is well to be able to say, "Thou hast, in love to my soul," delivered me from the pit of corruption, formed for me such a union, prospered the labour of my hands, blessed my bread and my water—

> "How sweet our daily comforts prove,
> When they are season'd with His love!"

Secondly. This principle crushes envy, "Be not thou afraid when one is made rich, when the glory of his house is increased." "Fret not thyself because of him who prospereth in his way"—you are not certain that his condition is really desirable—would you envy a man the wine he is going to drink, if you knew that it would poison him? or the robe he is going to wear, if you knew that it would infect him with the plague? On the other hand, you may err in your pity. You say, such a friend, alas! is reduced—but he is only taken down from the hill of danger and placed in the vale of safety. You say, he groans—yes, a limb is amputating: but it is to save the whole body from mortification and death.

Thirdly. The prosperity of the wicked, and the sufferings of the righteous, are a mystery, which has often perplexed even good men—but here it is explained. He can give in wrath, and refuse in mercy. He can indulge us to destruction; and he can chasten us, that we may not be condemned with the world.

Fourthly. Here we can harmonize the character and promise of God with those denials which He sometimes gives to our petitions. He is a God hearing prayer. He has said, "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find." But you have implored many things which you have never obtained—This helps you to understand the Scriptures, and shews you with what conditions and qualifications God has spoken. He did not engage to gratify your desires, whether his indulgence would be beneficial or injurious—This would have been a threatning, not a promise. "A heathen could say, "It is kind in the gods not to hear us, when we pray for things that are evil." If a man give "good things" unto his children, in answer to their reasonable and needful desires, he is a good father: and who would think of reflecting upon him, as not discharging the duties of his relation, because he does not, while they are incapable of judging for themselves, give them a knife or a loaded pistol, or suffer them to climb a ladder, and, becoming giddy, expose themselves to instant destruction?

Let us learn, also, with what a reserve we should always pray. Let us not presume to determine beforehand that certain things are indispensably necessary, and, because we think we absolutely want them, grow fretful and miserable when we are refused. This is to prescribe to God; to impeach his wisdom and his goodness: and nothing can be more improper in the unworthy who have no claims, and in the ignorant who have been so often deceived in their judgments. Let us always

refer ourselves to his counsel. Let us be always his followers, not his guides. Let us trust, and not teach him: and let us learn to imitate the example of David, who, in a case the most trying, said, "Carry back the ark of God into the city: If I shall find favour in the eyes of the Lord, he will bring me again, and shew me both it and its habitation—But if he thus say, I have no delight in thee; behold, here I am; let him do to me as seemeth good to him." And be it remembered, this is the way to succeed. When God gives in kindness, he produces a previous temperance of desire which will allow him to indulge us with safety. A preparation for our mercies is as necessary as a preparation for our trials and our duties—who thinks of this?

Finally, The subject says to us, in forcible language—Be moderate in your desires—"let your conversation be without covetousness—be content with such things as ye have." "Seekest thou great things to thyself? seek them not." Our Saviour teaches you this lesson, in your very devotion: "Give us this day our daily bread." All Jacob stipulates for is "bread to eat and raiment to put on." And "having food and raiment," says an apostle, "let us be therewith content." This is the grand improvement we ought to make of the piece of history before us—"Now these things were our examples, TO THE INTENT THAT WE SHOULD NOT LUST AFTER EVIL THINGS, AS THEY ALSO LUSTED." How were quails evil things?—Is not every creature of God good?—The case was this—They were evil in their consequences, and also in the principle from which they were desired. These Jews craved them unnecessarily: they had a sufficiency before, from the miraculous and merciful providence of Heaven—they craved them intemperately and unsubmissively: they demanded: "they wept aloud."—Christians, beware of such senseless and inordinate longings: beware of a roving fancy; of imaginary wants; of unsanctified wishes. "Dearly beloved, I beseech you, as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul." "They that are Christ's, have crucified the flesh, with the affections and lusts."

Men and Brethren!—We have forbidden you to seek after temporal things with too much solicitude—but remember, it is far otherwise with regard to divine concerns. Spiritual blessings suit the soul; afford real satisfaction; secure the friendship of God; endure for ever—these are our perfection. Here we cannot be too earnest, too ambitious, too covetous. "Open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it." "Ask and receive, that your joy may be full."—"And this I pray: that your love may abound yet more and more, in knowledge, and in all judgment: that ye may approve things that are excellent: that ye may be sincere and without offence till the day of Christ; being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ unto the glory and praise of God."

SERMON XIV.

HOPE.

And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts, by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.—Romans v. 5.

THE Christian never finds this world to be his rest. He is called to a life of labour and difficulty; of mortification and reproach; and his afflictions are many. But he possesses one incomparable advantage: he has a hope full of immortality. This renders every duty delightful: this teaches him, in whatsoever state he is, therewith to be content: this enlightens his darkness, and alleviates his sorrow. Like a helmet of salvation, it guards his head in the day of battle. Like an anchor of the soul, it holds and secures him in the storms of adversity. Like a pleasing companion, it travels with him through all the tediousness of the wilderness, and often reminds him of his removal from this vale of tears to the rest that remains for the people of God.—He is saved by hope.—He rejoices in hope.—

Of this hope the Apostle speaks, in the words which we have read; and his language is peculiarly worthy of our attention. "And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us." Let us consider the excellency, and the evidence of this hope.—Let us, I. SHEW HOW IT PRESERVES FROM SHAME; and, II. ASCERTAIN ITS CONNEXION WITH THE LOVE OF GOD.

PART I. It is not necessary to enlarge upon the nature of hope—it is a pleasing expectation of some future attainable good. But a commendation is here given it, which it will be useful for us to examine. IT MAKETH NOT ASHAMED. We may take three views of it. We may oppose it to the hope of the worldling; the hope of the Pharisee; and the hope of the Antinomian. Hope causes shame, by the INSUFFICIENCY OF ITS OBJECT—and this is the hope of the WORLDLING; by the WEAKNESS OF ITS FOUNDATION—and this is the hope of the PHARISEE; by the FALSENESS OF ITS WARRANT—and this is the hope of the ANTINOMIAN.—The hope of the Christian has the noblest object, the surest foundation—the clearest warrant: and, with regard to each of these, it MAKETH NOT ASHAMED.

First. Hope may cause shame by the INSUFFICIENCY OF ITS OBJECT—and such is the hope of the WORLDLING. And here we are not going to observe how frequently "the men of the world" never reach the mark and obtain the prize for which they run. We allow

them to be successful; and only call upon you to witness their disappointment when their expectations ARE accomplished. For what have they gained, to reward their toil, and to indemnify them for the sacrifices they have made! As they examine the acquisition which they so much overvalued, see how they blush; hear how they exclaim, "Vanity of vanities! all is vanity and vexation of spirit!"

"In vain we seek a heaven below the sky.
The world has false but flattering charms:
Its distant joys shew big in our esteem,
But lessen still as they draw near the eye;
In our embrace, the visions die;
And when we grasp the airy forms,
We lose the pleasing dream."

Look forward, and see the worldling called to strip and die. See him laying down all his honours, all his riches on the side of the grave; bidding farewell to every scene his soul held dear, and entering the eternal world destitute. Now thought can no longer be diverted: every disguise drops off.—Now he forms a true estimate of things—And what does he think of those objects for which he deprived himself of rest, and racked himself with anxieties?—for which he disregarded the calls of religion, and abandoned the prospect of endless life?—what does he think of them now they are fled, for ever fled?—and have left him without resource? What does Alexander now think of his bloody trophies? What does Herod now think of killing James, and condemning Peter, because he saw "it pleased the people?" What does Judas think of his thirty pieces of silver? They are all covered with confusion, and filled with contempt.

But let us view them in their present circumstances. Here, they are in their best estate: they have their portion in this life. Here, the crowned votaries of the world seem to be happy, and they are envied by all around them. They are envied—but it is only by the foolish and the ignorant, who know them not. They seem indeed to be happy—but penetrate through the glory which surrounds them—and look within—and you will find them harassed with doubts; agitated with fears; a prey to evil passions; "a troubled sea when it cannot rest, whose waves cast up mire and dirt." Could you approach them in those moments in which the delusions of imagination give place to the remonstrances of conscience and reason, you would hear them confessing—"All this is important only in the eyes of strangers. They gaze on the exhibition and admire—but we are behind the scenes, and view the naked ropes and pulleys. We are not happy; nor is it in the power of these things to satisfy our desires. In all this dissipation, we never taste a drop of pure joy. The friendship of the world is worse than nothing. We do not follow these vanities—we are dragged after them. Our life is bondage—O that we were free indeed!—ah! ye righteous, you alone have liberty and peace. Happiness is only to be found in a deliverance from the present evil world. We will retire: we will reform: we will seek a better, even a heavenly country."

Yes; tell me, you who have made the world your hope, what has it done for you? In the many years you have devoutly served it, how much has it advanced your happiness? What have your pleasures and satisfactions been, compared with your regrets and disgusts? How soon, when lulled to sleep, have your charming dreams vanished, and your waking disquietudes tormented you again! At the moment of my address—are you happy? Do you fear nothing? desire nothing? Are you not asking, in language with which you commenced your career twenty, forty years ago, Who will shew me any good? Do you not shun solitude and retirement? Are you not afraid of reflection? Do you not flee from one company and amusement to another, to get rid of yourselves? Do you never envy the happiness of the brutes? Are you strangers to a wish that you had never been born?—And if this be the case with regard to all your good things, what do you think of your evil ones? Having no support in the day of adversity, you MUST sink. Having no diversion, you CANNOT escape the scourge of your own mind; and conscience, free from restraints, will be able to take a dreadful blow.—Such is your present condition. You are as certain of disappointment in this world as in the world to come: and when you appear before God in judgment, you will not be heard to lament that all your enjoyments are over, that your happiness is ENDED and your misery BEGUN. No. You will not say, "Our happiness is ended"—but "we never were happy: our misery is begun—we always were miserable—we found the way as well as the end of transgressors hard; and, by a wretched time, we prepared ourselves only for a more wretched eternity."

On this dark ground we bring forward the Christian to advantage. The object of his hope is the greatest good a creature can possess; and while in every thing else the expectation exceeds the reality, in this the reality infinitely surpasses the expectation. When we propose the hope of the Christian, we exclude every evil we feel or fear; every imperfection which degrades or grieves us. It is "a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens;" it is "a city which hath foundations, whose builder and whose maker is God;" it is "a kingdom which cannot be shaken;" it is "a crown of glory that fadeth not away." Think of the company with which he will associate—all the truly wise and good: "the innumerable company of angels;" "the Lord of all," in whose "presence there is fulness of joy, and at whose right hand there are pleasures for evermore." Take his body: it

is now vile; but it shall be changed and fashioned like the glorious body of the Saviour—think of the body of the Son of God: a body to be worn by the Judge of all when he sits upon his throne; a body in which he will be for ever adored. This is the model to which the Christian will be conformed. And after all, this is only the inferior part of him: this is only the dwelling—what will the inhabitant be! this is only the instrument—what will the agent be! however refined and subtilized, this is only matter—what will the spirit be! "It doth not yet appear what we shall be; but this we know, that when he shall appear we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is." Such is his hope, and it "maketh not ashamed." His understanding does not reproach him for pursuing such a prize. He does not blush to avow his purpose to the world. He does not shrink from a comparison with philosophers, princes, heroes. He leads a sublimer life: he has taken a grander aim.—And when he has acquired this blessedness, will he be ashamed that he so highly valued it, and that to gain it he was willing to deny himself, and take up his cross? No; rather, if shame could enter heaven, he would be ashamed to think—that it made so feeble an impression upon his mind; that it engrossed so little of his attention; that, with such a happiness in prospect, he should ever have walked mournfully before the Lord; and that, with such a prize suspended before him, he should ever have been so sluggish in his endeavours to seize it.

Secondly. Hope may cause shame by the WEAKNESS OF ITS FOUNDATION—and such is the hope of the SELF-RIGHTEOUS PHARISEE. For on what does he place his dependence but something of his own—his own worthiness, or his own works?—And here we may observe, first, that what he relies on does not come up to the nature of genuine religion, but is something merely ritual, ceremonious, external, in which the heart has no concern. He derives his encouragement from negative qualities, from comparison of himself with others, from the number of his performances, from the balancing of duty with omissions, and of virtue with vice. "And the Pharisee stood, and prayed thus with himself: God, I thank thee that I am not as other men are, —extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this Publican. I fast twice in the week; I give tithes of all that I possess." Secondly, if the works he pleads were in their principles truly spiritual and holy, they would not afford a ground of dependence. They would be a part of the building, but could not be the foundation. They would furnish us with evidence, but could not give us a title. Thirdly, the indulgence of such a hope is even criminal, and highly offensive to God. While he seeks to obtain a right to eternal life by his own obedience, he is seeking salvation by the works of the law, and not by the faith of Jesus Christ: accordingly, he opposes the whole design of the Gospel dispensation; robs God of his peculiar glory; reflects upon his wisdom, as having been employed in a needless trifle; contemns his authority in commanding us to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ; denies his truth in the record which he has given of his Son; frustrates his grace, and makes Jesus Christ to be dead in vain. He disregards the love and mercy of the Saviour, tramples under foot the blood of the Son of God, and views his righteousness and his sufferings as wholly unnecessary, or as only an addition to supply a deficiency. Therefore, fourthly, such a hope can never secure him from shame. It will be found "like a spider's web;" curiously wrought, but easily, irreparably destroyed. The basis being too weak, the superstructure falls, and crushes him as a fool and an offender—guilty in his very ruin. "Too proud," says God, "to submit to my righteousness, you shall appear before me in your own. Refusing the Gospel, you shall be tried by the Law to which you have appealed. Unable to save yourselves, I devised a method of salvation: I revealed it—but this you have despised, and have sought another—Walk in the light of your own fire, and in the sparks that ye have kindled: This shall ye have of mine hand; ye shall lie down in sorrow."

—Now see the awakened, humbled sinner. He is asking, "How shall man be just with God?" "Wherewith shall I come before the Lord?" "Where can I safely rest a hope that maketh not ashamed?" These inquiries lead him to the Bible—and he soon finds the information he wants. "The Son of man is come, to seek and to save that which was lost. It hath pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell. He hath made us accepted in the Beloved. He is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth. By him, all that believe are justified freely from all things"—This is like cold water to a thirsty soul. This attracts him; this determines the course of his application. "In him will I trust. He is the door; by him will I enter. He is the only refuge; in him I will hide. There IS no other, and I DESIRE no other foundation; and on this will I build. I love obedience, I pray for gratitude; but I abhor the thought of merit. When I have done all, I am an unprofitable servant. Sin mixes with all I do. I MUST relinquish every other confidence: I have no medium between THIS reliance and DESPAIR."

Now this hope cannot deceive him: it is as firm as the truth of God and the all-sufficiency of the Saviour can make it. "Behold," says God, "I lay in Zion a stumbling-stone and rock of offence; and whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed." In proportion as the faith of the believer increases, he partakes of this assurance, and can

say, "I know in whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed to him against that day." See him advancing to the throne of God—"Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died." Who can hinder his approach? He is seen marked with "the blood of sprinkling;" he is heard making mention of His righteousness only.—

"All joy to the believer! He can speak—
Trembling, yet happy; confident, yet meek.
Since the dear hour that brought me to thy foot,
And cut up all my follies by the root,
I never trusted in an arm but thine,
Nor hoped but in thy righteousness divine.
My prayers and alms, imperfect and defiled,
Were but the feeble efforts of a child.
Howe'er performed, it was their brighter part
That they proceeded from a thankful heart:
Cleansed in thine own all-purifying blood,
Forgive their evil, and accept their good:
I cast them at thy feet—my only plea
Is what it was—dependence upon thee—
While struggling in the vale of tears below,
That never fail'd—nor shall it fail me now.

Angelic gratulations rend the skies;
Pride falls unpity'd, never more to rise;
Humility is crown'd; and faith receives the prize."

Thirdly. Hope may cause shame by the FALSENESS OF ITS WARRANT—and such is the hope of the ANTINOMIAN. How dreadful will it be "to fall into the hands of the living God," while we are imagining ourselves to be his friends: to suppose ourselves in the road to heaven, and drop at once into the depths of hell! "There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the paths of death." And in this way all those are walking, who, while they profess to expect eternal life, and to place all their dependence upon the Saviour, "have not the Spirit of Christ," and are devoid of his image: whose faith does not overcome the world; whose hope does not purify them "even as He is pure." For while in this state, their expectation of heaven, whatever be their knowledge or their creed, is a mere fancy. A man, with all his ignorance, may as well persuade himself that he is the greatest philosopher; or, with all his indigence, may as rationally conclude that he is possessed of all the wealth of the Indies; as persons imagine, that they are in a fair way for glory, while they are strangers to real sanctification and "newness of life."

There is nothing in the Scripture that does not condemn such a hope. It assures us, that "without holiness no man shall see the Lord;" and that except we "be converted, and become as little children," we "shall in no case enter the kingdom of God." Hence our Saviour, by a very striking similitude, holds forth the folly of leaning on any thing as a PROOF of our state, separate from holy obedience. "Whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and DOETH them, I will liken him unto a wise man, who built his house upon a rock: and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat upon that house; and it fell not, for it was founded upon a rock. And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and DOETH them NOT, shall be likened unto a foolish man, who built his house upon the sand: and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat upon that house; and it fell, and great was the fall of it."

And, indeed, to take another view of the subject, it would be perfectly useless to give such a man a title to glory, and even to bring him there—For he would be miserable still: he would carry hell along with him in his sin: he would have no capacity for the services, no relish for the enjoyments of heaven—God himself cannot do that which contradicts the essential perfections of his nature; and he cannot make us happy with himself till he has made us holy like himself. "For what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?" Thus the very nature of things, as well as the word of God, necessarily limits this hope to the regenerate and sanctified. And therefore the grand inquiry should be—what evidence you have of this change, and what reason you are able to give of the hope that is in you? A more convincing and satisfactory one it is impossible to assign, than the Apostle furnishes—

PART II. When he tells us, "Hope maketh not ashamed; BECAUSE THE LOVE OF GOD IS SHED ABROAD IN OUR HEARTS BY THE HOLY GHOST, WHICH IS GIVEN UNTO US." Let us examine the connection there is between this love, and the accomplishment of our hope. The following considerations will render it obvious.

First. This love is the blessed proof of the Divine regard—for the affection is mutual: "I love them that love me;"—yea, our love to him is the consequence of his love to us: "I have loved thee with an everlasting love; therefore with loving kindness have I drawn thee. We love him because he first loved us." And what can we desire more, than to know we are beloved of God? What does not his friendship insure? With Him, there is no variableness, or shadow of turning. He is able to do for us exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think. He knoweth all things. He is very pitiful, and of tender mercy.

Secondly. This love characterizes the persons for whom this happiness is reserved. Search the Scriptures, and see who are authorized to claim the promise of eternal life—Not those, who are enemies to God by wicked works—not those who live without God in the world—No: but those, and those only, who desire, and strive to please and to serve Him—"We know that all things work together for good to them that love God." "Blessed is the man that endureth temptation; for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that

love him." "Hath not God chosen the poor of this world, rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him?"

Thirdly. This love qualifies us for the glory which shall be revealed. Take a proper view of this happiness. Is it not divine? Does it not flow from the presence of God! from the display of his perfections? from the adorations and praises which he will eternally receive!—What then can prepare you for it but the love of God! If you do not love a person, it would be a torment rather than a delight to be continually with him, and to hear him extolled. But the stronger the love is which you bear to another, the more pleasure you feel in his company and conversation, the more satisfaction you derive from the share you have in his regards, and from the confidence which enables you to say, he is mine. By loving God, you are prepared for a happiness which is found only in him. And has he made you meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light?—and will he fail to give you possession? Has he qualified you for a situation which you shall never fill! and prepared you for a blessedness which he never designed you to experience!

Fourthly. This love is indeed the beginning, and the foretaste of this happiness. We are always the same with the object of our affection. The image dwelling in the mind, leaves its impression. We take the likeness of the excellency we contemplate, and are exalted into the perfection we adore. If our love be fixed upon any thing mean and sordid, it will debase us. If it be fixed upon creatures, we shall partake of their changes and miseries. If it be fixed on the ever-blessed God, we shall become divine and heavenly; it will dignify, and refine, and tranquillize, and fill, and satisfy the soul. With this love, we cannot be miserable. It renders difficult things easy, and bitter ones sweet. It makes the duties of religion to be "ways of pleasantness." We call "the sabbath a delight." We are glad when they say to us, "Let us go into the house of the Lord." It is good for us "to draw near to God." O the "comforts of this love!" They are heaven come down to earth —Heaven is the world of love—There it breathes; there it reigns; there it triumphs. It is all love, and only love—"And he that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God, and God in him." Hence it fully appears, that a hope connected with the love of God, may be safely indulged, and can never make us ashamed. For this love is the proof of the Divine favour —the character of the heirs of promise—the preparation for future glory—the commencement of heaven, the dawning of the day, the first-fruits of the Spirit, the earnest of our inheritance.—

Men and Brethren, attend to a few reflections, which naturally arise from this important subject. The first is awful and distressing. We have reason to fear that the hope cherished by the greater part of mankind, and by too many professors of religion, is such as will cover them "with everlasting shame and contempt."—Perhaps there are some of this deluded number in this assembly. You are ready to say—"Our minds are easy—we feel no forebodings—we hope to be saved, and are not inclined to question the propriety of our conclusion." Even this circumstance looks suspicious. This reluctance to examine your state betrays apprehension of its goodness. And who, in a case of such moment, would leave things doubtful and uncertain! Suffer me then to ask you what your hope is? Will it bear investigation? Is it sanctioned by the word of truth! Has it been formed in the light of conviction, or is it the offspring of darkness! Is there no danger of its proving false and fatal!—Such the hope MUST prove, that is accompanied with no suitable influence, productive of no proper effects—in other words, that is not in alliance with the love of God. But, alas! if the love of God was in you, it would be impossible for you to live as you now do. You could not banish Him from your remembrance; your meditation of Him would be sweet, and your thoughts of Him would be precious. You could not love the world; "for if any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him." You could not transgress the divine laws: "for this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments." You could not be regardless of the welfare of your fellow-creatures: for "if a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar; for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?" "Whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?" Destitute of the love of God, it matters not what you are—If this be not the grand influencing principle of your lives, your orthodoxy is only a December's night, equally clear and cold; your religion is vain; your hope presumption, delusion, destruction.

Secondly. You may learn, from hence, how to attain "the full assurance of hope unto the end." It is not by dreams and visions, sudden suggestions, mysterious impressions, and an inexplicable consciousness—but by keeping yourselves in the love of God, and abounding therein more and more. It is absurd to imagine that your hope of heaven will be lively, if your love of God be weak and languid. Every worldly conformity will impede the exercise, and darken the prospect of this hope; every sin will give Satan an advantage over you, and rob you of much evidence and consolation. Though the blessings of salvation are all of grace, they are to be enjoined only in the way of obedience. "Then shall

we know, if we follow on to know the Lord. His going forth is prepared as the morning: and he shall come unto us as the rain, as the latter and the former rain upon the earth." He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father; and I will love him, and manifest myself to him."

Thirdly. There are some of you, in whose hearts the Holy Ghost has shed abroad the love of God. By a display of infinite benevolence, he has slain the enmity of your minds, enlightened your understandings, and renewed your dispositions. It is now your chief aim to please and to enjoy him. And your language is, "Whom have I in heaven but thee, and there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee! The Lord is my portion, saith my soul; THEREFORE WILL I HOPE IN HIM,——" Yes—and you have reason to do so. Let the exercise of this hope be constant and increasing. Though you have much in possession, you have infinitely more in reversion. In whatever sense you are poor, in one you are certainly rich—HOPE. From the emptiness of the creature you can turn to the fulness of the Word, and say, "Thy testimonies have I taken as my heritage for ever, for they are the rejoicing of my heart." You have now the supplies of minority, and in a little while you will be "Lord of all."—Give vigour and scope to this principle, in all the circumstances which can awaken thy concern. Hope for strength equal to thy day. Hope for succour in trouble; for assistance in duty; for help in death. Hope for a joyful resurrection, a blessed immortality, a crown of glory that fadeth not away. "NOW THE GOD OF HOPE FILL YOU WITH ALL JOY AND PEACE IN BELIEVING, THAT YOU MAY ABOUND IN HOPE, THROUGH THE POWER OF THE HOLY GHOST.

SERMON XV.

THE PARABLE OF THE TWO SONS.

What think ye? A certain man had two sons. And he came to the first, and said, Son, go work to-day in my vineyard: he answered and said, I will not; but afterward he repented, and went. And he came to the second, and said likewise: and he answered and said, I go, Sir; and went not. Whether of them twain did the will of his father? They say unto him, the first.—Matthew xxi. 28—38.

My Brethren, it is no very easy thing to lodge an obnoxious truth in a mind armed with prejudice. "Lovers of themselves," men are averse to the knowledge of their imperfections, and remain "willingly ignorant" of discoveries which would interrupt their pursuits, or disturb their slumbers. Hence the wise have contrived a species of instruction, by which they conceal their design, till the sentiment they wish to convey has taken possession of the mind. Then they strip off the disguise, and exhibit their meaning: and the man finds, to his surprise and confusion, that he has admitted a conclusion which criminates himself, and that out of his own mouth he is condemned. He is led on unconsciously, step by step, till he finds his retreat cut off, and he is compelled to surrender.

He who "spake as never man spake," excelled in this as well as in every other mode of tuition. A memorable instance is now before us—His adversaries had asked our Saviour, by what authority he had commenced reformer, and had purified the temple.—He engages to satisfy them, provided they will answer him one question; namely, Whence John derived his authority to preach and baptize? They found themselves equally in a dilemma, whether they acknowledged the origin to be human or divine—"If we shall say, from Heaven, he will say unto us, why then did ye not believe him? But if we shall say, of men, we fear the people; for all hold John as a prophet." Hence they affect ignorance, and remain silent. Our Saviour perceiving their perverseness, refuses their inquiry; and, by a familiar representation, induces them to pass judgment on themselves. "But what think ye? A certain man had two sons. And he came to the first and said, Son, go work to-day in my vineyard: he answered and said, I will not; but afterward he repented, and went. And he came to the second, and said likewise: and he answered and said, I go, Sir; and went not. Whether of them twain did the will of his father? They say unto him, the first."

The Parable has a particular application, which may be thus explained. John preached to the Jews. His audience consisted of two classes: the profane, and the pretending. Some among his hearers were profligate—Such were the publicans and harlots. These made no profession of religion: they never spake of the Messiah, or hoped for his kingdom. But when they heard John, they received his doctrine—were humbled by it—and obtained repentance and remission of sins. Others were sanctimonious—Such were the Scribes and Pharisees. They assumed extraordinary appearances of devotion, observed every punctilio of the law, wore a peculiar dress, used a singular gait, crucified their countenances, made long prayers and frequent fasts, gave tithes of all their possessions, and pretended a high regard for the writings of Moses and the prophets, who all testified of Christ. But when his forerunner came, and announced his speedy approach, they inconsistently rejected his ministry. Thus far we cannot be mistaken, for we follow an infallible Guide—"Jesus saith unto them, Verily, I say unto you, that the publicans and harlots go into the kingdom of God before you. For John came unto you in the way of righteous-

ness, and ye believed him not; but the publicans and harlots believed him. And ye, when ye had seen, repented not afterward, that ye might believe him."

By a more extensive allusion, it applies to the Jews and the Gentiles. The Gentiles were the children of disobedience: they had lived without God in the world, and the way of peace had they not known. But when the Gospel was published among them, they "obeyed from the heart the form of doctrine which was delivered to them: and being made free from sin, they became the servants of righteousness." The Jews from the beginning were the professing people of God. They had never been wanting in high pretensions and promises. When the Law was given on Horeb, they exclaimed, "All that the Lord commandeth us will we do, and be obedient." When Joshua addressed them in Sechem, they again said, "The Lord our God will we serve, and his voice will we obey"—"Nevertheless, they did flatter him with their mouth, and they lied unto him with their tongues. For their heart was not right with him, neither were they steadfast in his covenant."—"What shall we say then? That the Gentiles, which followed not after righteousness, have attained to righteousness, even the righteousness which is of faith: but Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness, hath not attained to the law of righteousness. Wherefore? Because they sought it not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law; for they stumbled at the stumbling-stone; as it is written, Behold, I lay in Zion a stumbling-stone, and rock of offence: and whosoever believeth on him, shall not be confounded."

The similitude will stand as an illustration of various characters to the end of time. Accordingly, we are going to consider it, I. As HOLDING FORTH THE COMMAND OF GOD TO HIS CREATURES. And, II. As EXEMPLIFYING THE MANNER IN WHICH IT IS REGARDED BY THEM.

PART I. "The Lord looketh from heaven: he beholdeth all the sons of men." Neither as his creatures, or as his subjects, are they beneath his concern. To display his authority and to secure their welfare, He addresses them in language appropriate to their circumstances. His COMMAND is distinguished by three characters. It is AFFECTIONATE—it is PEACTICAL—it is URGENT.

First. It is AFFECTIONATE. He speaks as unto children—"My SON, go, work to-day in my vineyard." He is the lovely Father of all mankind; and though sin has rendered us unworthy of his care, it has not destroyed our relation to him. "We have had fathers of our flesh, who corrected us; and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection to the Father of spirits, and live!" They were only the instruments of our existence: but to Him the name belongs in all its perfection. "We are his ofispring;" "we are all the work of his hands." Our very souls are his; produced by his power, and subject to his agency. This is the common character given of him in the New Testament. Under this encouraging representation we are taught to address him in prayer: in this tender relation we are to view him as dispensing his commands. I see the father blending with the sovereign: I see goodness mingling with authority: I obey from love: it is a Father I serve, and his service is perfect freedom. If He employ us as children, he "knows our frame, and will remember that we are dust." He will not lay upon us more than is meet: He will be kind to our infirmities, and spare us, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him. "We have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear, but the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. Wherefore no more a servant, but a son; and if a son thou art then an heir of God through Christ."

Secondly. It is PRACTICAL. For to what does the Father call him? To "WORK in his vineyard."—I admire this Father. He does not bring up his children in idleness. Though he be a rich man, and have a vineyard of his own, he requires them to labour. And "it is good for a man to bear the yoke in his youth." The Grand Seignior of Turkey is always taught some mechanical business. The Jews, whatever was their rank, always gave their sons some manual trade. Paul had a learned education, and was brought up at the feet of Gamaliel; but he knew the craft of tent-making. There was wisdom in this plan. It preserved the young from sloth; it filled up the vacancies of life; it prevented temptation; it made them useful in society; it furnished them with resource in case of reduction and distress. Adam was placed in the garden of Eden to dress it. The Son of God, till he assumed his public character, wrought at the business of a carpenter. Heaven is all energy and activity: "they rest not day nor night." It is better to pursue the meanest occupation, and even to be a servile day-labourer, than to live in idleness, a mere cumberer of the ground. Parents! early accustom your children to exertion, and difficulties. Bring them up idly and delicately, and they are ruined for this world, and the world to come. I equally pity and condemn that father, who is ashamed or afraid to say to a son—"Go, work in my vineyard." And what think you of God! He assigns us our place of action, and prescribes the nature of our employ. It is extensive and various. Our diligence is to be used in "working out our salvation with fear and trembling." Sinner! there is a burden lying upon thy shoulders, which, unless it be removed, will sink thee to the lowest hell. Thou art pursued by the avenger of blood, and if overtaken, thou wilt

assuredly perish—Thy first concern should be a deliverance, a refuge. Thy first effort should be an application to Him who came into the world to save sinners. "Then said they unto him, What shall we do, that we might work the works of God? Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent." This is your first care. And a second is like unto it—personal sanctification. You are called not only to believe, but to obey: not to shew your faith instead of your works, but your faith by your works.—Many would rather consider the Gospel as designed to furnish a substitute for holiness, than as a system which requires piety and morality in all its parts. But how readest thou? Where does it promise a salvation in sin? Where does it encourage a hope which leaves its possessor impure? "God has not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness. The grace of God, which bringeth salvation, hath appeared to all men: teaching us, that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world." Nor are you less required to serve your generation according to the will of God. "None of us liveth to himself." Our fellow-creatures have claims upon us. We are to "rejoice with them that rejoice, and weep with them that weep;" to love as brethren; to "bear one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ." And however inferior our stations or slender our abilities, we have all one talent.—How have we employed it? We have all had some means and opportunities of usefulness—What brand have we plucked out of the fire? What naked wretch have we clothed? What child of ignorance have we instructed? In what instances have we resembled Him who "went about doing good;" who pleased not himself; who came, not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many?

Thirdly. It is URGENT. You are called not only to labour, but to labour immediately. "My son, go work TO-DAY in my vineyard." The King's business requires haste—and this is the business of the King of kings. A business of importance requires haste—And no business can be so momentous in its consequences as this. A business requires haste that can be performed only in a certain time, especially if the season be short and uncertain—And "what is thy life? It is even as a vapour that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away." The Scripture therefore only borrows the language of common sense when it says, "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom in the grave whither thou goest." Observe your elder Brother: he never lost a moment: "I must work the work of Him that sent me while it is day: the night cometh, wherein no man can work." God always says, "To-day"—"to-morrow" is always the language of the Enemy of Souls. And wherefore? Because procrastination is the most successful device he employs. Because, if he can keep you from religion TO-DAY, he knows—either that you will not live till to-morrow—or that the delay will leave you more disinclined to duty, and will obstruct your way with fresh impediments. "Now is the accepted time; now is the day of salvation." Such is the command of God. Let us see,

PART II. THE MANNER IN WHICH IT IS REGARDED. This is exemplified in the behaviour of these two sons. There is a remarkable difference between them. One proves better than he promises. The other promises better than he proves. Of the one it may be said, that his words were evil and his actions good; of the other, that his words were good and his actions evil.

Behold the first. No sooner does he hear the command of his father, than he answers, "I WILL NOT;" and walks off, rebellious and insulting—To such a length of rudeness, insolence, and presumption does sin sometimes carry men; so that they do not make excuses, or plead only for delays, but positively and daringly refuse! "They say unto God, Depart from us, for we desire not the knowledge of thy ways." "Who have said, With our tongue will we prevail; our lips are our own; who is Lord over us?" "But his citizens hated him, and sent a message after him, saying, We will not have this man to reign over us."—Who SAYS this? Yonder Swearer, who never opens his mouth but to express the abomination of his heart. That Drunkard, whose insatiable appetite, like the horseleech, cries, Give, give; and never saith, It is enough. The Fornicator, who lives in chambering and wantonness. The man who neglects all the ordinances of religion, who never calls upon the name of God, never hears his word, never honours his sabbaths. These make no pretences to godliness; embarrass themselves with no formality; wear no disguise; use no hesitation. They openly shew the image of their master impressed upon their forehead. They explicitly avow their determination. Actions speak louder than words; and nothing less than this is the dreadful language of their lives—"I am for hell: I will run the downward road: I am resolved to perish."

And is it possible, that characters like these should ever be heard "asking the way to Zion," or seen walking before God "in newness of life?"—"Such were some of you: but ye are washed; but ye are sanctified; but you are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God." Yes, even this son—"AFTERWARD REPENTED AND WENT." He came to himself—reflection

returned—looking back, he saw the old man lifting up his hands to Heaven, and then wiping his eyes from tears—and he cried—"What have I done! Is he not my father? Has he suffered me to want any proof of tenderness which he could shew me! Do I thus requite his kindness and his love! What was there unreasonable in the command I rejected! He that will not work should not eat—What is it for a son to work in a father's vineyard! Is it not labouring for himself! Mine is the expectation—I will go."—For, my Brethren, no sooner was this undutiful child reclaimed than he was employed.—He did not satisfy himself with returning and confessing and bewailing his offence. He acted repentance. He knew the will of his father which he had transgressed—and he repented and WENT. The one was the consequence and the evidence of the other. Who could have believed the reality of his remorse and the sincerity of his acknowledgment, unaccompanied with reformation and obedience?

Are there no individuals in this assembly whose history I have recalled to mind? Do you not remember your alienation from the life of God?—But in your departure from him your minds were far from being at rest. Sometimes you thought of home—a Father struck you—your rebellion appeared unreasonable—you condemned yourselves. These recollections at first visited you occasionally, like unwelcome guests, and you got rid of them. At length you found them quartered upon you, like so many soldiers—resistance was useless. Alone—in business—surrounded with company—these convictions followed you. You begun to pray; to read the Scripture; to associate with the Lord's people. You brought forth fruits meet for repentance. The change in your disposition was discovered in your conversation: and this became the language of your actions as well as of your lips—"I have sinned; what shall be done unto thee, O thou Preserver of men? What I know not teach thou me: if I have done iniquity, I will do so no more. Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth."

Let us consider the second son. On hearing the command of his father, "he said, I go, Sir; and went not." His language was respectful, his promise was fair, and he walked forth towards the vineyard, till he apprehended himself out of sight—Then he turned aside—loitered away his time—joined evil company—set off to a revel—in a little time "spent all his substance in riotous living"—died in wretchedness—and as he expired was heard to groan, "O that I had hearkened to a father's counsel!"

Ah! how many in a few years have we seen, whose pretensions were equally strong, whose promises were equally flattering, whose declensions have been equally grievous, whose end has been equally fatal!

We have seen children trained up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, to whose tender minds religion was presented by maternal care in all its loveliness; who lisped the language of prayer and of praise as soon as they began to speak—They promised well.

We have seen young men, ingenuous, teachable, despising the bondage of corruption, hating even the garment spotted with the flesh—They promised well.

We have seen hearers under the preaching of the Word alarmed, melted, almost persuaded to be Christians—They promised fair.

We have seen men reclaimed from various vices becoming regular in their lives, and attentive to moral and relative duties—They promised fair.

We have seen characters coming forward eager to join in Christian communion, and laying themselves under an obligation to walk "in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless."—These promised fair. And nothing would have been more uncandid and suspicious, than to have questioned their present sincerity, or their future perseverance—And where are they now? See the tears of their connections; hear the sighs of their ministers; listen to the triumph of the enemy—They are turned aside to vain jangling—they are so bewitched, that they cannot obey the truth—they are walking in the counsel of the ungodly, standing in the way of sinners, and sitting in the seat of the scornful: "for it has happened unto them according to the true proverb: the dog is turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed, to her wallowing in the mire."

Let us conclude by deriving an inference from the subject, and by addressing ourselves to persons of two classes.—The parable fully authorizes us to observe, that religious effects are often very unanswerable to expectation; and that the most specious characters are not always the most likely to enter into the kingdom of Heaven. The subject is delicate: we know we tread on dangerous ground, nor would we advance without caution. God forbid that we should ever plead for wickedness, or intimate that immorality is preferable to morality.—Our Lord intended to establish no such principle by these examples. He does not view these things as they are in their own nature, but as they are frequently found in their accidental relations and consequences. And is it not undeniable that persons possessed of distinguishing privileges and moral endowments are too often filled with pride, wrapped up in self-righteousness, lulled to sleep by carnal security, deeming themselves safe, from comparisons with those who are profligate? Are they not too often offended when told—that they must be indebted for

salvation to grace perfectly free and unmerited—that they must be accepted upon the same terms with the most vile—and that however excellent these things may be in themselves, they afford them no ground of dependence, yield them no claims whereof they may glory before God! An attempt to couch the eyes of those who say we see, an offer of pardon to the innocent, a communication of alms to the wealthy, would only exasperat and disgust—But would this be the case with the blind, the guilty, and the poor? It is comparatively easy to convince the more criminal—how can they deny the charge! to alarm them—how can they deny the danger? Having no armour of defence—they can sooner receive a wound which will make them cry for mercy. Conscious that they have no righteousness of their own—they more readily admit, that if saved at all, it must be by grace. Having no shelter in which to hide—when they see the storm approaching, they willingly flee for refuge to the hope set before them in the Gospel.

Nor are such trophies of Divine grace unusual. We can appeal to the page of Histor : and we can refer to our own age. We have seen the most unlikely materials subdued by Divine agency to holy purposes; and sinners called from courses the most ungodly, whose conversion has awakened not only the joy, but the astonishment of their pious friends. Let this encourage our hope. Let us consider none of our fellow-creatures as desperate, and, giving up our endeavours and our prayers, abandon them. Reformer! let it animate thee. "Be not weary in well-doing. In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thine hand: for thou knowest not whether shall prosper, this or that; or whether they both shall be alike good. Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him; let him know, that he who converteth a sinner from the error of his way, shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins." Minister! let it encourage thee! "Can these dry bones live?—Prophesy upon these bones; and say, Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live." "Is any thing too hard for the Lord?" Parent! let it animate thee—though means have hitherto proved ineffectual, and instructions and tears have been in vain—"I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham!"

Men and Brethren, let me ask you—Which of these two sons did the will of his Father?—You say, and you say justly, Both of them were culpable: the one was rude, and the other false. But which, on comparison, do you prefer! You say, and you say truly, The first. On what principle? Because his actions were better than his words, and his latter end fairer than his beginning. Yes; better is a late penitent than an old formalist. Yes; more desirable is the condition of this returning sinner, trembling at God's word, broken-hearted with a review of unprofitable years, and resolving to redeem the time by future zeal—than the state of yonder professor who has sat under the Word till he is past feeling; honouring God with his lip, while his heart is far from him; having a name to live, while he is dead, saying perpetually, by appearances, I go, but never actually taking one step in the ways of godliness.

But I have another question—Which of these two sons do you at this time resemble?—It is undeniable that you have had calls from God. Your duty, and the consequences of inattention, have been plainly set before you. He has spoken by his creatures. He has addressed you by his providence. Afflictions have had a voice. Fire has rushed out of the brambles to which you repaired for shelter. The gourd, whose shade refreshed you, has withered away. It was a broken reed upon which you leaned: it disappointed your hope, and pierced you through with many sorrows. Sickness told you that you were mortal. The death of others reminded you of your own; and loud spake the silent grave. Many a remonstrance, many a warning, you have had from conscience. From sabbath to sabbath you have heard the Gospel. Ministers, some in harsher accents, and some in milder language, have laboured to persuade you—No, you cannot plead ignorance—you do not want motive and encouragement—Suffer me then to ask you, Which of these sons describes you!

Are you saying, with the first—"I will not!"—What irreverence! "A son heareth his father, and a servant his master: if then I be a father, where is my honour? and if I be a master, where is my fear? saith the Lord of Hosts."—What ingratitude! "Hear, O ye heavens; and give ear, O earth: for the Lord hath spoken, I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against me." "Do ye thus requite the Lord, O foolish people and unwise? Is he not thy Father that hath bought thee? hath he not made thee and established thee?"—What madness! If you abide by this determination, you are undone: "because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience." Have you duly considered the work you decline? It is a service the most reasonable, the most honourable, the most pleasant, the most profitable: it is "profitable unto all things, having the promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come." Here we cannot labour in vain. The reward is sure; the recompense is glorious. Nor are we called to labour without assistance. He who employs us has engaged to make his strength perfect in our weakness, and to render his grace sufficient for us. To which we may

add, that it is a work the most indispensable—it is the one thing needful—and it is at the peril of thy soul and thy eternal happiness to say, "I will not"—But I HAVE said this, and lived accordingly.—"O that my head were waters, and mine eyes a fountain of tears!"—Returning sinner, there is hope in Israel concerning this thing. There is forgiveness with Him, and repentance secures it.

> Raise thy downcast eyes, and see
> What forms His throne surround:
> They, though sinners once like thee,
> Have full salvation found—
>
> —He has pardons to impart,
> Grace to save thee from thy fears:
> See the love that fills his heart,
> And wipe away thy tears.

Thy present distress is a pledge of a preparation for the discovery of his forgiving love—He repented, and went—Go, and do likewise; and encourage thyself under every gloomy fear by representations the most appropriate and tender—"I have surely heard Ephraim bemoaning himself thus: Thou hast chastised me, and I was chastised, as a bullock unaccustomed to the yoke; turn thou me, and I shall be turned, for thou art the Lord my God. Surely, after that I was turned I repented; and after that I was instructed, I smote upon my thigh: I was ashamed, yea, even confounded, because I did bear the reproach of my youth—Is Ephraim my dear son? is he a pleasant child? for since I spake against him, I do earnestly remember him still: therefore my bowels are troubled for him; I will surely have mercy upon him, saith the Lord." "And he said, I will arise, and go to my Father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against Heaven and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son; make me as one of thy hired servants. And he arose, and came to his Father—But when he was yet a great way off, his Father saw him, and had compassion on him, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him—And said to his servants, Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand and shoes on his feet. And bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it; and let us eat and be merry. For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found. And they began to be merry."

Are you saying, with the second—"I go, Sir!"—This is well—but, oh! beware of insincerity. Consider seriously the solemn profession you make. I go, Sir!—But remember to whom you say this—a Being, whose eyes are as a flame of fire, and who desireth truth in the inward parts: thou art not lying unto man, but unto God. I go, Sir!—But remember that the vows of God are upon you; that you have raised the expectation of your friends and foes; that heaven, earth, and hell are looking for a practice which will verify your pretensions: and will you tell them all, "I am only—a liar—a hypocrite?" I go, Sir!—But remember, that your doom will be determined not by "fair speeches" and a "show of godliness," but by your actions and your lives. "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven." I go, Sir!—But remember, nothing is so dangerous to the soul as false dealing with God; that no character is so rarely converted as a false professor; that no state is so tremendous as the end of an apostate. I go, Sir!—But remember—it is the language of God—"if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him." "For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted of the good word, and the powers of the world to come, if they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame—But, Beloved, we are persuaded better things of you, and things that accompany salvation, though we thus speak."

SERMON XVI.

CHRISTIAN DILIGENCE.

And besides this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue, knowledge; and to knowledge, temperance; and to temperance, patience; and to patience, godliness; and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, charity.—2 Peter i. 5—7

My Brethren, it is a very easy, and it is a very difficult thing to be a Christian. It is a very easy thing to be a nominal Christian: but it is a very difficult thing to be a real one. It is a very easy thing to be a modern Christian: but it is a very difficult thing to be a Scriptural one. Do not imagine that we mean to trifle, or advance a paradox to awaken your attention at the beginning of a discourse: we speak "the words of truth and soberness." It is undeniable that we have many Christians among us, who are strangers even to common decency and morality; "being abominable, and disobedient, and to every good work reprobate." Others make a much stricter profession—but, alas! their Christianity leaves them as it finds them, and in their lives there is very little difference discernible between them and the people of the world. Their tempers are unsubdued; their tongues are unbridled; they mind earthly things;" they make no sacrifices, no exertions. Their hope is a lifeless expectation. Their faith is a scheme of doctrine, which they have laid asleep in the mind, and which never disturbs or stimulates them.

But is this the religion of the New Testament!—Search the Scriptures. Observe the

delineations of the Gospel, and compare yourselves with them. In these, a profession is found to mean a practical dissent from the spirit and manners of the world; the hope which maketh not ashamed is held forth as purifying the possessor from the love of sin and the dominion of sense; and the faith by which we are justified and saved, is distinguished as a vital and a vigorous principle, drawing after it a train of graces and good works. Witness the language of our apostle. "And besides this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue, knowledge; and to knowledge, temperance; and to temperance, patience; and to patience, godliness; and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, charity." Christians! these words specify, I. The additions which you are to make to your faith. And, II. Prescribe the means by which you are to make them.

I. The apostle does not exhort Christians to seek after FAITH—This he supposes them to possess already. He addresses them as believers, and calls upon them to pursue a course worthy of their faith, corresponding with their faith, and to which their faith binds them.—"Remember, Christians, the worthy name by which you are called. Consider the tendency of the principles you profess to believe. You have embraced the Gospel—it lays an obligation upon you to deny all ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present world. You say you have faith—but faith without works is dead, being alone. Faith resembles a foundation—of high importance in case of a building—but useless if no superstructure be reared. It is only a beginning—which is nothing without progress. What are clear notions unless they influence; or proper motives unless they impel! Abraham had faith, and he offered up Isaac. Moses had faith, and he esteemed the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt. Abel and Noah had faith—but it was belief, alive and in motion: it led the one to sacrifice, and the other to build. If you know these things—happy are ye if ye do them. You have received the truth—now walk by it. You are sound in doctrine—be so now in practice. You are orthodox—now be holy, defraud no man, speak evil of no man. You have faith—add to your faith virtue; and to virtue, knowledge; and to knowledge, temperance; and to temperance, patience; and to patience, godliness; and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, charity." Such is the meaning of the apostle: and thus we conceive he would have explained himself, had he been living in our day and called to address some of our audience.

The first addition which he requires of you as believers is VIRTUE. But it does not here signify goodness in general: it is immediately distinguished from the various excellences included in the common acceptation of the word. It therefore expresses some particular quality; and by referring to the Greek and Latin writers we can soon determine what it is—They mean by it Fortitude, Courage. My Brethren, this principle in the whole of your Christian course will be found indispensably necessary. You live in a world unfriendly to religion. You are called to various duties, in the discharge of which you will meet with oppositions and discouragements the most painful and trying. It will be found no easy thing to deny yourselves, and take up your cross; to pluck out a right eye, and to cut off a right hand—being both the patients and the agent too. It will be found no very easy thing to encounter opinion: to incur the frowns of connections, the scorn of superiors, the ridicule of the multitude; to feel yourselves in a small and despised minority; to have your designs suspected, your actions misrepresented, your very virtues transformed into vices, and where you have deserved best of your fellow-creatures to be most condemned by them.

Some of these difficulties indeed might be avoided if you were only to BE religious and not to APPEAR SO. But not to observe that it is impossible to conceal religion in numberless instances when it is fairly reduced to practice, we wish you to remember that you are required to be open and explicit; you are commanded to "let your light shine before men;" to "confess with the mouth" as well as to "believe with the heart;" to "hold fast," not your faith, but the "profession of your faith, without wavering;" and not only to be "on the Lord's side," but to be active in his service, "rising up for him against the evil doers, and standing up for him against the workers of iniquity."

If we trace things to their origin, we shall find a thousand evils springing, not from ignorance but cowardice. Pilate condemned a Saviour of whose innocency he was conscious—because of the Jews. Many of the Pharisees "believed on him; but feared to confess him lest they should be put out of the synagogue." The disciples were afraid, and forsook him. Peter trembled, and denied him. It is owing to the influence of the same cause, that persons can hold the truth in unrighteousness; refuse to hear the very doctrines they believe; change with every company in which they are found; hear the name of God blasphemed and the Gospel vilified, and "sit as men in whose mouths there is no reproof." But holy courage will raise a man above this influence. It will produce in him a dignity which scorns every mean compliance; a firmness which gives decision and consistency to his character; a determination not indeed to make singularity his aim, but to walk by those rules which will unavoidably

render it a consequence, a boldness to follow his convictions wherever they may lead him, and inflexibly to persevere in the path of duty, regardless of the reproach he may endure, or the losses he may sustain.

A second addition is KNOWLEDGE. And this very properly follows the former. It serves to characterize, and to qualify the courage of the believer. It reminds us—that it makes him open, but not ostentatious—ready, but not challenging and vaunting—decided, but not violent—bold, but not rash and inconsiderate. It teaches us that courage is a force which wisdom is to employ—Courage may urge us to undertake the war, but judgment is to manage it: it may impel us along in our course, but knowledge is to observe the road—otherwise our animation will only lead us astray, and the swifter our speed, the greater will be our folly.

And hence it will be easy to determine the nature of this qualification. It is practical knowledge; it is what we commonly mean by prudence, which is knowledge applied to action. It is what Paul recommends when he says, "Be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is. Walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise. Walk in wisdom towards them that are without, redeeming the time." It is what Solomon enjoins when he says, "let thine eyes look right on, and thine eyelids look straight before thee. Keep sound wisdom and discretion; so shall they be life unto thy soul and grace to thy neck. Then shalt thou walk in thy way safely, and thy foot shall not stumble: when thou liest down, thou shalt not be afraid; yea, thou shalt lie down, and thy sleep shall be sweet."

This kind of knowledge results principally from experience and observation; and he is blameable indeed who does not grow wiser as he grows older, and who does not make every day a correction of the former. Our own history affords us some of the best materials to improve and embellish our character. —There, being heedless, I was surprised. By that trifle I was robbed of temper. Here, I dashed on a rock, and a plank saved me. Our rashness should teach us the meekness of wisdom. We should derive strength from our weaknesses, and firmness from our falls.

But, alas! what numbers are there, upon whom the continuance of life, and all means of improvement, seem to be thrown away! They have eyes, but they see not: ears have they, but they hear not. They pass through a country full of instructive scenes and interesting occurrences—but they travel in a hearse. And here many religious people seem peculiarly deficient: they perpetually remind us of the observation, "the children of this world are wiser in their generation than the children of light." They are always roving from one public assembly to another, and are never alone. They hear much and think little. Even the kind of information they obtain often serves only to draw them away from things of immediate concern, and to disqualify them for the duties of the stations in which they move. With their eyes stretched to the ends of the earth, or roving among the stars, they go on regardless of any thing before them, and fall over every stumbling-block in the road.

Whereas "the wisdom of the prudent is to understand his way." "The prudent man looketh well to his going." He draws down his knowledge from speculation, and uses it in common life. He judges of the value of his notions by their utility. He studies his character and condition. He examines his dangers, his talents, his opportunities. He marks events as they arise, and has a plan to receive them. He distinguishes times, places, circumstances. He discerns both when to keep silence, and when to speak. He reproves with skill. He gives with judgment. He "approves things that are excellent."

Thirdly. You are to avoid INTEMPERANCE. There is a sense in which this word may be applied to the mind as well as the body. For we are required to think soberly—to keep all our passions within due bounds—to moderate our desires to enjoy earthly pleasures, and our anxieties to acquire worldly possessions. Our Saviour therefore commands his disciples "to take heed lest at any time their hearts should be overcharged," not only "with surfeiting and drunkenness," but also "the cares of this life, and so that day should come upon them unawares." The motive is as pertinent as it is awful; for if we are to live in expectation of this important event, and are to be so habitually prepared for it as not to be taken by surprize when it comes, it is necessary that we should be temperate in all things.

The word, however, principally refers to moderation in satisfying our bodily appetites. But can it be needful to enlarge upon a subject like this in a Christian congregation?—Surely, something far short of the pure and exalted system of the Gospel would be sufficient to restrain men from degrading themselves below the beasts that perish. Surely, we need not interpose the authority of God, and reveal the misery he has prepared in another world, in order to keep them from being gluttons and drunkards. Against this, Heathenism exclaims—Nature rises up—Health preaches. Intemperance is arraigned and punished here. It impoverishes our circumstances. It beggars our families. It renders the body lazy and sickly, and breeds all manner of diseases. It besots the mind, and stupifies reason; it impedes with filthy crudities the way through which the spirits should pass, and bemires the soul so that it drags on heavily; it unfits for every duty, and prepares

for every sin———Surely one half of this is enough to make you flee all intemperance; and to lead you not only to avoid the grosser excesses of this infamy, but to abhor every degree of approach to it. Shun therefore those "whose god is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame." Scorn the bondage of corruption. Disdain to be the slaves of a pampered appetite. Never advance to the bounds of things lawful. Beware of beginnings, and the excuses which would authorize them. "But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh to fulfil the lusts thereof."

Fourthly. You are to add to your temperance PATIENCE. There is an obvious and striking relation between these. The one requires us to bear, the other to forbear. The one regards the good things, the other the evil things of the world. By temperance we are preserved under the smiles of prosperity, and by patience we encounter the frowns of adversity. These two therefore furnish us "with the armour of righteousness on the right hand and on the left." And the one is as necessary as the other. For you will not be assailed from one side only. When the weather is fair, the road agreeable, and the adjoining groves and meadows very alluring, you are in danger of pausing and wandering—but the storm driving in your face, and your feet sinking in deep mire where there is no standing, you will sometimes be discouraged because of the way, question whether you are right, and debate with yourselves whether to advance or turn back.—Yes, Christians, you will have need of patience, and perhaps of much more than you are aware. You know not what a day may bring forth. "Riches" may "make to themselves wings, and flee away." Your "friends may deal deceitfully with you as a brook." Your present comforts may become your greatest troubles. Trials, which so far from expecting, never entered your thoughts, may suddenly arise. Has not this world been always a vale of tears? Did any of your brethren who were before you escape sorrow? Are you not assured that it is through much tribulation you must enter the kingdom? But patience will prepare you for every changing scene, and every suffering hour. What it cannot remove, it will alleviate; what it cannot diminish, it will strengthen you to bear. It will produce a composure which will allow you to discover every favourable circumstance in your situation; a silence which will enable you to hear every message of the rod. "Let patience have her perfect work; that ye may be perfect and entire, lacking nothing."

Fifthly. GODLINESS is indispensable. Courage and Prudence, Temperance and Patience, would be no Christian qualities, if in the exercise of them we were not influenced by suitable regards to God. Without this reference, our religion is nothing more than morality: our practice has no adequate principle: our duties are in vain, as to their acceptance; and precarious, variable, lifeless, irksome, as to their performance. When we are governed by the authority of God, and make his word our rule, and his glory our aim, we please him; and though our services are attended with many imperfections, they are accepted. When we love and fear him, when we realize his presence, confide in his mercy, implore his grace, and maintain continual communion with him through the mediation of his Son and by the influences of his Spirit—our work becomes our privilege; all is enlivened; all is secured. In this godliness consists: it is, to bring God into every part of life and religion; to make him the Alpha and Omega of all we do. Though morality is distinguished from godliness, it always and inseparably attends it; and he never performs his duty towards God, who lives unrighteously towards man: "If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar; for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen? And this commandment have we from him, That he who loveth God, love his brother also." Hence

We are to add to godliness BROTHERLY KINDNESS. And who are our brethren? All Christians. However they may differ from us in their age, their dress, their features, they are all children of the same Father, members of the same family, heirs of the same grace, travellers towards the same heavenly country. They have therefore claims upon us: and we are to aid and relieve them. "Whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him? Let us not love in word, neither in tongue, but in deed and in truth." Who are our brethren? All mankind. "God hath made of one blood" all the nations of the earth. They possess the same powers of conscience, reason, and immortality; they are capable of the same privileges; need the same succours; are liable to the same afflictions.—Hence love, good-will to the whole human race, finishes the train, and becomes "the bond of perfectness."—And—

—To brotherly kindness, CHARITY. Thus we are "the children of our Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust." Thus every dispute concerning the extent or limitation of benevolence is settled—As we have opportunity, we are to do good unto ALL MEN, especially unto THEM who are of the HOUSEHOLD OF FAITH. "To some, indeed, I am peculiarly bound; to few, only, can I be personally useful—but my kind wishes and prayers extend to every individual of the human race

By the law of the Gospel I am required to cherish in my bosom those sentiments of benevolence which are only hindered from being universal in their exercise by inability and necessity."

Thus you are to add to your faith virtue; to virtue, knowledge; to knowledge, temperance; to temperance, patience; to patience, godliness; to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, charity.—But let us,

II. Inquire how this is to be accomplished. The apostle tells us. It is by GIVING ALL DILIGENCE. To excite you to this, we would remind you—that these things deserve your diligence—that diligence will secure them—and that they cannot be attained without diligence.

First. These things DESERVE YOUR DILIGENCE. It is pitiable to see men employing their zeal and consuming their strength upon trifles. But this is the case with regard to the pursuits of thousands. You may ask them, as they rush by, "Wherefore do ye spend your money for that which is not bread, and your labour for that which satisfieth not?" None of these things can relieve them in their greatest exigences, promote their chief interests, reward them for their toil, or indemnify them for the sacrifices they make. But this cannot be said of spiritual blessings and graces. These are in the sight of God of great price. They are necessary to man. They purify his passions, and tranquillize his conscience. They enrich, they dignify him: they are his perfection. They make him happy in himself, and render him a blessing to all around him. Conceive how striking and how useful a single individual would be if seen—thus adorning the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things: not only a believer, but courageous; not only courageous, but wise; not only wise, but self-denying, and gentle, and pious: and all this followed by kindness and benevolence! What then would a number of these characters accomplish as they passed along through life? They would look forth as the morning, fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners: bearing down reproach, disarming infidelity, putting to silence the ignorance of foolish men, and constraining beholders to glorify God in the day of visitation.

Secondly. Diligence WILL INFALLIBLY SECURE these things. In the career of worldly good, many run, but few obtain the prize: and the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong; neither yet bread to the wise, nor yet riches to men of understanding, nor yet favour to men of skill; but time and chance happeneth to them all. Fame depends upon a combination of circumstances, which may never return. A despised rival may suddenly rise up, and carry off an acquisition which you had been pursuing incessantly through life. Though the sower soweth in hope, many things may frustrate his expectations. "But to the righteous there is a sure reward." "He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall, doubtless, return again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him." "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you: for every one that asketh, receiveth; and he that seeketh, findeth; and to him that knocketh, it shall be opened." In the world, men spare no pains, decline no difficulty, fear no hazard, though they have nothing more than probability to excite and encourage them—and shall we be insensible and motionless, who have nothing less than actual certainty?

Thirdly. There is NO ATTAINING THESE THINGS WITHOUT diligence. Diligence is indispensable.

Indispensable, if we appeal to analogy. You must labour even for "the meat that perisheth." Through what a succession of process does your bread pass before it be prepared for use! The same may be said of raiment; of trade; of science—of every thing valuable and excellent—you do not expect to gain them without diligence; you would not esteem and prize them if you could.

> "On earth naught precious is obtain'd,
> But what is painful too.
> By travail, and to travail born,
> Our sabbaths are but few."

—Indispensable, if we appeal to the character of a Christian. He is a merchant, a scholar, a husbandman, a traveller, a soldier—the anxiety of the merchant, the application of the scholar, the hardy toil of the husbandman, the wearying progress of the traveller, the painful exercise of the soldier, are images which ill accord with indolence and ease.

—Indispensable, if we appeal to the promises of the Gospel. These all require it, encourage it, produce it. Is God said to work in us to will and to do of his own good pleasure? It is made a motive to induce us to work out our own salvation with fear and trembling. Has he engaged to renew our strength? It is when we are waiting upon him—this is the condition: it is, that we may mount up with wings as eagles; that we may run and not be weary, and walk and not faint—this is the design. And if the promises of divine grace do not supersede the necessity of diligence—what else can render it needless?

Awake, then, my fellow Christians, and be zealous. Be not satisfied with your present attainments; but, forgetting the things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, be ever pressing towards the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. Others are ambitious, covetous, active. The learned are adding to their intellectual treasures; the honourable are adding to their splendour and distinctions; the rich are adding house to house,

and field to field: and none of them saith, "It is enough." And have you no concern to go from strength to strength, to be changed from glory to glory, to shine more and more unto the perfect day? Will not you add to your faith virtue; and to virtue, knowledge; and to knowledge, temperance; and to temperance, patience; and to patience, godliness; and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, charity?

Here, My Brethren, call forth all your diligence. Here is a prize which is able to reward it—which will assuredly crown it—but which it is impossible to acquire without it. Keep this always in your remembrance, that there is only one way to prosper in religion; that your strength is not to sit still; that something more is necessary than airy notions, sleepy wishes, feeble resolutions, wavering and cold endeavours; that temptations are to be resisted, obstacles to be overcome, means to be incessantly used—especially prayer, that divine grace may be mighty in you, and sufficient for you. "He becometh poor that dealeth with a slack hand; but the hand of the diligent maketh rich." "The soul of the sluggard desireth, and hath nothing: but the soul of the diligent shall be made fat." "And we desire that every one of you do shew the same diligence, to the full assurance of hope unto the end: that ye be not slothful; but followers of them, who through faith and patience inherit the promises." "Wherefore, my beloved Brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord."

SERMON XVII.

THE ABUSE OF DIVINE FORBEARANCE.

Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil.—Eccles. viii. 11.

My Brethren, to know things in their principles has always been deemed the highest kind of science. The attention of a vulgar mind may be roused by effects; but a wise man looks back from consequences to the cause, and explores the source of the disease in order to prescribe more certainly the means of cure.

That there is much wickedness in the world, is undeniable. Whence does it arise?—Solomon views it as resulting from an Abuse of Divine Forbearance. Not that this is the only source of iniquity: but it is a very powerful, and a very prevailing one. In such a dreadful course as Sin, a man needs encouragement; and he awfully derives it from the goodness and long-suffering of his God. "Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men as fully set in them to do evil."

"THERE IS A SENTENCE DENOUNCED AGAINST SIN—THE EXECUTION OF IT IS COMMONLY LONG SUSPENDED—THIS DELAY EMBOLDENS THE SINNER IN HIS CRIMES. These three things are obviously contained in the words before us; and with these I would engage your present attention. "To-day, if ye will hear his voice, harden not your heart."

I. Sin is deservedly called an EVIL WORK. I fear none of us are sufficiently impressed with a sense of its vileness and malignity. It is "the work of the Devil." It is folly, ingratitude, rebellion, treason. It degrades the soul: it defiles the soul. It robs us of the likeness, the presence, the favour of God. How deplorable are its consequences! What misery has it produced!—For it cannot go unpunished.—THERE IS A SENTENCE DENOUNCED AGAINST IT.

God is of "purer eyes than to behold iniquity:" "He is angry with the wicked every day." But what is anger in God? Not a passion, but a principle—a determination to punish. It is justice—and this justice is essential to the perfection of his character: and we could neither adore nor love him, if we believed that he was indifferent to an evil which not only subverts his designs, but destroys the welfare of his creatures. What would you think of a magistrate who should "bear the sword in vain;" and who, when you led before him one who had invaded your property, and another who had killed your child, should smile, and say, What is this to me? Would you not exclaim—Why, are you not "a minister of God for good, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil?"—Crimes, in all well-governed empires, are punished; and on their punishment much of our peace and safety depend. Hence prisons are necessary as houses; and our houses would afford us no security without prisons. What would be the consequences of the abrogation of all the penalities attached to crimes in this country—but disorder, anarchy, robbery, and murder!

God is the governor of the world. But there is no governing without laws, and laws are nothing without sanctions—from these they derive their force and their efficacy. Laws issued by a legislator, unaccompanied with threatenings, would be harmless; and inspiring no terror, would be trifled with, or considered only as advice. Thus the notion of punishment follows from the very constitution of law. If any should be ready to say, "The case before us is a peculiar one, and laws so excellent as those which God has given us should be cheerfully obeyed for their own sake,"—We answer, First, that man was originally made capable of fear, and that God even in a state of innocency addressed himself to this passion, to aid his authority and

secure his dominion. Witness the threatening, "In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." Secondly, as man is now fallen and depraved, and lives so much under the dominion of sense, such a revelation of terror is become far more necessary, to check the power of appetite, and break the force of temptation. Accordingly a sentence the most tremendous is denounced against every transgressor.—Do you ask where it is recorded?

Look within thee, O man, and read it there: read it in the trouble, the remorse, the forebodings of thy own conscience. Why are you uneasy when any thing reminds you of the approach of Deity? Whence has sickness, a sudden death, an opening grave, such power to alarm you? Why are you unwilling to be alone; and why do you require a succession of business and diversion to maintain your tranquillity? Are not these things more frequently your refuge than your choice? And are you not fearful to leave any hour unfilled up, lest a faithful monitor finding you disengaged, should afford you employment? Why are you uneasy, not only for the time—but for weeks and months after the contraction of the guilt? Why are you uneasy, not only when you are discovered—but when no eye sees you? Why are you uneasy, not only when you have exposed yourselves to the penalty of civil law—but when you have committed crimes for which you are amenable to no earthly tribunal? What judge, what prison is it you then dread? Why do you not shake off these terrors, and be a man?—Why do you suffer them to follow you into solitude and into company? Turn, and frown them back; and suffer your peace of mind to be no longer disturbed—Ah! it is in vain to argue against a truth, which depends, not only on reasoning, but sentiment; and to annihilate a principle interwoven in human nature by the finger of God.—Where is it recorded!

Examine the history of mankind, and read it there. See it in the expulsion of the happy pair from Paradise; in the flood which destroyed the world of the ungodly; in the fire and brimstone which consumed the cities of the plain. Go, and read it inscribed on the pillar of salt, and engraven on the arms rolled to the shore of the Red Sea. View it in the desolations of a people hated and scattered, once the favourites of Heaven—View it in every calamity, in every disease, in every death.—Where is it recorded!

Open the Bible, and peruse it there. There you read that the soul that sinneth, it shall die. There the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all unrighteousness and ungodliness of men. Sometimes it is expressed in simple terms, and more frequently in figurative language. Sometimes a little of it is distinctly specified, but often the whole is left in dreadful obscurity. Sometimes we see the curse coming to meet the sinner, and beginning his misery here; but more generally we are led forward to eternity—For the present is only a state of trial—the future is a world of retribution: here we only sow—there we shall reap: the sentence is already denounced, but the infliction is commonly long suspended. This is the

II. Division of our subject. Sentence against an evil work IS NOT SPEEDILY EXECUTED. Here, however, we wish to observe—That there is no uncertainty as to its final accomplishment—it is taken for granted that it will be executed. "God is not a man, that he should lie; or the son of man, that he should repent: hath he said, and shall he not do it! or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good!" "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my word shall not pass away." It may be also remarked—That he does not always defer the execution of the sentence. Men have perished even in their crimes. Witness the destruction of Korah and his company. The leprosy of Gehazi. The death of Ananias and Sapphira.—And what has happened to one, may befall another.

But the language of the wise man agrees with the general proceedings of the Supreme Being. With much long-suffering he endures the provocations of the ungodly, and delays from day to day and from year to year the wrath which they have deserved. He is slow to anger, and punishes with reluctance. Judgment is his strange work. Patience is one of the distinguishing glories of his character: it is often ascribed to him in Scripture; and the exercise of it appears in numberless and undeniable instances. The old world was warned an hundred and twenty years before the flood came, and took them all away. Four hundred years He suffered the Amorites to fill up the measure of their iniquities. Forty years long was he grieved with the Jews in the wilderness. If we take the history of this people ages after, we hear the God of patience, in language the most exquisitely tender, saying, "How shall I give thee up, Ephraim? how shall I deliver thee, O Israel! how shall I make thee as Admah! how shall I set thee as Zeboim? Mine heart is turned within me, my repentings are kindled together." And are not you, are not ALL of you examples? Can you consider the time of your provocation—the number of your offences—the aggravations of your iniquities; and not say, with wonder and admiration, "It is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not!"—Let us take some particular views of this dispensation, that we may discover the principles from which it springs, and the purposes which it is designed to answer.

We are obviously intended for a social state: but the intercourse we are required to maintain with our fellow-creatures exposes us

to innumerable provocations and offences; and the effects of sudden and uncontrolled resentments would be fatal to ourselves and others. Hence we are commanded to be "slow to wrath;" and to be "patient towards all men." And in this forbearance God places himself before us as our example. He teaches us a divine lesson of meekness and kindness; and calls upon us to cherish that gentleness which is not easily provoked, and to repress those passions which would impel us to revenge. "Therefore is the kingdom of heaven likened unto a certain king, which would take account of his servants. And when he had begun to reckon, one was brought unto him which owed him ten thousand talents: but forasmuch as he had not to pay, his lord commanded him to be sold, and his wife and children, and all that he had, and payment to be made. The servant, therefore, fell down, and worshipped him, saying, Lord, have patience with me, and I will pay thee all. Then the lord of that servant was moved with compassion, and loosed him, and forgave him the debt. But the same servant went out, and found one of his fellow-servants, which owed him an hundred pence; and he laid hands on him, and took him by the throat, saying, Pay me that thou owest. And his fellow-servant fell down at his feet, and besought him, saying, Have patience with me, and I will pay thee all. And he would not; but went, and cast him into prison till he should pay the debt. So when his fellow-servants saw what was done, they were very sorry, and came and told unto their lord all that was done. Then his lord, after that he had called him, said unto him, O thou wicked servant, I forgave thee all that debt, because thou desiredst me: shouldest not thou also have had compassion on thy fellow-servant, even as I had pity on thee? And his lord was wroth, and delivered him to the tormentors, till he should pay all that was due unto him. So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses."

If the commission of sin were always immediately followed with the punishment of it, this world would not be a state of probation —obedience would not be voluntary, but forced—we should walk, not by faith, but by sight —we should not honour God by our confidence in his perfections and in the dispensations of his Providence—he would not be "a God hiding himself"—his "judgments" would not be "a great deep"—and the whole nature and design of religion would be subverted.

If the wrath of God instantly crushed every transgressor, he would be the destroyer rather than the governor of the world. To destroy, is comparatively easy, and discovers little perfection: but the wisdom of God appears in reigning over the extravagance of the world; in taking into his plans such diversities and contradictions, and bending every thing he meets with, however adverse, to his own purposes; in bringing good out of evil, and order out of confusion; in making the wrath of man to praise him. It is also worthy of our remark, that many of those who deserve destruction are useful, in the present state of the world: they are able to promote the arts and sciences; and are qualified to render great services to a country. Such men are links in the chain of Providence, and their destiny secures them. There are also purposes which the wicked only CAN accomplish. God calls the Assyrian, the rod of his anger and the staff of his indignation; and says, "I will send him against an hypocritical nation; and against the people of my wrath will I give him a charge, to take the spoil, and to take the prey, and to tread them down like the mire in the streets." When he had fulfilled the designs of Heaven, in punishing some and chastening others, he was laid aside. The ungodly, by their continuance, are useful to the righteous: they exercise their patience, call forth their zeal, and wean them from the present world.

Mankind are so variously and intimately blended together, that it is scarcely possible to strike an individual only, without affecting others. Now the judge of all the earth will not punish indiscriminately, and destroy the righteous with the wicked. He would rather spare a thousand enemies, than injure one friend. If ten righteous men had been found in Sodom, the place would have been preserved. The angel did not, yea, he said he could not, do any thing till Lot was safely escaped. Why were not the messengers suffered to eradicate the tares? Because it would have been doing an injustice to THEM? No—but lest, "in gathering up the tares, they should also root up the wheat with them."

But, above all, the goodness of God is to be acknowledged in this dispensation. "The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness: but is long-suffering to us-ward; not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." We are to "account that the long-suffering of our Lord is salvation." We see this exemplified in Saul of Tarsus. Had he, in his way to Damascus, been smitten to hell when he was struck to the ground, he had never obtained mercy; never have been a Christian, a preacher, an apostle. While the execution of the criminal is still suspended, a pardon may arrive: while life continues, there is a possibility of repentance. "I will give him," says God, "a longer period—other means may be more effectual. I will afford him a season of recollection—he may come to himself. I will leave him—thoughtfulness may succeed levity: disappointment may break the charm which now fascinates him. He is near the melancholy consequences of his perverseness—then

ne will know what an evil and bitter thing it is to forsake the Lord. At such a time he will lose the desire of his eyes with a stroke, and his children shall follow their mother to the grave—then he will enter his closet—and say—And now, Lord, what wait I for? my hope is even and only in Thee." Here, Christians, if I knew your histories, perhaps I could say to one of you, Oh! it was well you died not before a change in your affairs occasioned your removal to that city; for there you "heard words whereby you were saved." To another, You were mercifully spared till Providence brought you that religious friend; for he "guided your feet into the path of peace." To a third, What if you had been cut off in your sin! You went on frowardly—you proceeded from evil to evil—a change appeared hopeless—but by-and-by you began to be in want: all prodigal as you were, you said, "I will arise, and go to my father"—Nor was it too late—He came forth to meet you—"received you graciously, and loved you freely."—"Therefore doth the Lord wait, that he may be gracious; and therefore will he be exalted, that he may have mercy upon you." Such is the design of this suspension—But, alas! "let favour be shewed to the wicked, yet will he not learn righteousness:" and Solomon reminds us,

III. That the depravity of man turns divine clemency into presumption, and abuses the patience which bears with him to purposes the most vile. "Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, THEREFORE THE HEART OF THE SONS OF MEN IS FULLY SET IN THEM TO DO EVIL."

In this mode of proceeding there is something specious. Man is a rational creature, and is obliged to give his actions a colour of reason. What he cannot forbear, he will endeavour to justify: what he cannot justify, he will extenuate: what he cannot extenuate, he will excuse—and, unhappily, he possesses no little ingenuity in devising excuses to authorize the passions, or to keep off remorse and alarm.

When men begin a wicked course, conscience is tender, scrupulous, fearful. They are soon terrified, and often look immediately for the punishment they have deserved. But it does not arrive—They venture again—The expectation diminishes. After many successes and impunities, they go forward carelessly and boldly. What they once approached with hesitation, now grown familiar, ceases to shock. What once made them tremble, is now ridiculed as a trifle. Where conscience once thundered, it is now scarcely heard. They cannot think that what produces no evil consequences can be so bad as they once apprehended. They infer from the Divine indulgence, either that there is no God, or no Providence; either that God does not attend to these things, or will not punish them; or derive from his lenity such views of his goodness as lead them to conclude that it has no bounds. There is a disposition in the mind to reason from the past to the future. Thus, because reprieved so often, Pharaoh concluded he should escape again; and this encouraged him to renew his disobedience. And thus He who assigns motives and gives language to actions has said, "There shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, and saying, Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation." "These things hast thou done, and I kept silence: and thou thoughtest that I was altogether such an one as thyself. He hath said in his heart, I shall not be moved: for I shall never be in adversity." "Wherefore doth the wicked contemn God? He hath said in his heart, Thou wilt not require it." "Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil." Nothing is more common, nothing more vile, nothing more fatal, than this perversion.

First. Solomon does not draw the reflection from a few single instances—Nothing is more common than this abuse. Perhaps many of you are examples of it. To decide this, I ask—Would you have continued in your sinful courses to this hour, had you not been persuaded that God would bear with you?—Would you now perpetrate another crime, if you supposed that God would instantly destroy you for it? Why, then, it is the long-suffering of God, that encourages and emboldens you to go forward; and you are evil because he is good.

Secondly. Nothing can be more vile and base than this abuse. Clemency affords you a shelter from the storm; and you enter; and then wound your kind Benefactor, and wound him BECAUSE he had pity upon you. Had you the least ingenuousness, you could not help admiring, and loving, and serving such a Being—but you insult him BECAUSE of his excellences and loving-kindnesses. You sin because grace abounds, and choose to appear a monster in a garb of ingratitude blacker than hell.

Thirdly. Be assured nothing will be more fatal. "God shall wound the head of his enemies, and the hairy scalp of such an one as GOETH ON STILL in his trespasses." Mercy is your final resource; and when this is provoked, to what can you turn? If a father disown you, what expectation can you have from an incensed adversary? God is, in this case, peculiarly concerned to shew his displeasure. He designed this long-suffering to answer other purposes; and shall he be over-ruled and mocked? No; he will not lose the honour of his patience, though you may lose the advantage. If it be not glorified in your sal-

vation, it will in your destruction. Wrath loses nothing by sleeping—it grows fresher by repose. The longer the stone be in descending, the heavier it falls. Long preparation indicates the more dreadful execution.

Whoever may hope for audience in the day of visitation, you cannot expect it. "When your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind; when distress and anguish cometh upon you—Then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer; they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me; for that they hated knowledge, and did not choose the fear of the Lord: they would none of my counsel, they despised all my reproof. Therefore shall they eat of their own ways, and be filled with their own devices."

Whoever may hope to come off with a lighter doom, you cannot expect it. Thy reckoning is increased by delay—thou "despisest the riches of his goodness, and forbearance, and long-suffering: not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance; but after thy hardness and impenitent heart, treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath, and revelation of the righteous judgment of God." "But, and if that servant say in his heart, my Lord delayeth his coming; and shall begin to beat the men servants and maidens, and to eat and drink, and to be drunken; the Lord of that servant will come in a day when he looketh not for him, and in an hour when he is not aware; and will cut him in sunder, and will appoint him his portion with the unbelievers."

Whoever may hope to be apprized of his danger, surely you cannot expect it. "He that being often reproved hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy." "For when they shall say, Peace and safety, then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape."

And do you promise yourself exemption always!—Even the patience of the vine-dresser has an end: he only prayed for another year; and perhaps this was more than eleven months ago. Are you sure that he who waited today, will wait to-morrow also? Having stood so long knocking, will he never depart? May he not withdraw, this very evening, saying, "O that thou hadst known in this thy day the things which belong to thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes."

But at present this is not your case. Your harvest is not yet past, your summer is not yet ended. The lives of some of you are spared even to old age. Grey hairs are here and there upon you; and each of them proclaims the patience of God. You are in his House—and before his Throne—and capable of hearing his Word. He has seen all your sin, and abhorred all. He has had you completely in his power: he could have frowned you into perdition. He has guarded you from accidents, and raised you up from beds of languishing. How many, once your companions in folly and sin, have been removed! where are they now! O let this goodness encourage you—not to sin, but to pray. Approach, and kneel before him. "O Thou, who hast given me space, give me also grace to repent. I am now sensible of my guilt, and of thy goodness. I now know what misery I have deserved, and what a blessedness thy mercy is ready to bestow. I am filled with sorrow, and shame, and self-abhorrence, to think that I have so long transgressed thy Law, and despised thy Gospel; provoked thy justice, and contemned thy grace. If, after all, Thou wilt be favourable to such an ungrateful wretch, and accept the remains of a sinful life, I here devote all I am, and all I have, to Thee. Thee I will love and obey. Adieu, my vain and foolish desires, my degrading lusts, my unprofitable pursuits—Pardon—Heaven is even now attainable, and I am following after it. O my God! enable me to run and not be weary, and to walk and not faint." May God inspire you with these sentiments! To Him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

SERMON XVIII.

ASSURANCE.

In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the Devil: whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God; neither he that loveth not his brother.—1 John iii. 10.

My Brethren, when God would admonish and encourage Jeremiah in the discharge of his office, he said, "If thou take forth the precious from the vile, thou shalt be as my mouth." This address determines the duty of every preacher, who would "make full proof of his ministry." It requires him to attend peculiarly to the states of his hearers; to delineate character; to bring forward frequently and boldly the difference between the righteous and the wicked; and to apply with confidence and wisdom the threatenings and promises of the Scripture, for the conviction of the sinner, and the consolation of the godly.

In this manner our Apostle studied to shew himself approved unto God,—"a workman that needed not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth."—"In this, the children of God are manifest, and the children of the Devil: whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God; neither he that loveth not his brother."

Of the persons here mentioned we shall consider three things. I. The character by which they are described. II. The manner in which they are discovered. III. The marks by which they are distinguished.

Men and Brethren! While I am endeavouring to explain and improve a subject so important, let me entreat you to employ your minds, not in determining the condition of others, but in judging your own: "let every man prove his own work, and then shall he have rejoicing in himself alone and not in another: for every man shall bear his own burden."

I. The persons opposed are THE CHILDREN OF GOD, AND THE CHILDREN OF THE DEVIL. To suppose that there are no such characters, would be a reflection upon the wisdom of the inspired writer in making the comparison. But let us consider the meaning and importance of the titles.—"The children of God, and the children of the devil," mean good and bad men. It is common in the Scripture to call persons, distinguished by any quality or acquisition, the children of those from whom it was originally derived, or by whom it was pre-eminently possessed. Thus we read in the Book of Genesis, that "Jabal was the FATHER of such as dwell in tents, and of such as have cattle; and that Jubal was the FATHER of all such as handle the harp and the organ." And thus they who have the faith and do the works of Abraham, are called the CHILDREN of Abraham.—The devil is the introducer of evil: the wicked morally proceed from him—partake of his depravity—resemble him—are proud like him, are liars like him, and so of the rest. Hence, says our Apostle, "He that committeth sin is of the devil, for the devil sinneth from the beginning." And hence our Lord says to the Jews, who were endeavouring to accuse and destroy him, "Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father you will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it."—God is the author of all goodness; and Christians are said to be "born of him"—to be "partakers of the divine nature"—to be "followers of him as dear children." They admire his excellences, and imitate his perfections. Is he a God of truth? They walk in the truth. Is he holy? They are holy. Is he merciful? They are merciful.—And thus they are "the children of their Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust." The sinner makes the devil his model, and every degree of transgression adds to the likeness. The believer aspires after conformity to the highest of all examples; and as he grows in grace, he is "changed into the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.

These are the persons here described by the characters of "the children of God, and the children of the devil." This division is the most general and universal. It extends to all mankind; and, by a classification the most simple, reduces the innumerable diversities of the human race into two orders. It enters this house, and arranges this assembly: it finds no individual in a state of neutrality: it instantly blends each of you with those children of wrath, or with these heirs of glory.

It is also a division the most serious and eventful. It overlooks every thing adventitious, and considers only character. It passes by the distinctions of speech, complexion, rank; and regards the soul and eternity. It views even the diversities, which arise from the endowments of nature and the gifts of Providence, as nothing, compared with those which spring from faith and infidelity, holiness and sin. How soon will the difference between the learned and illiterate, tyrants and slaves, poor and rich, be abolished!—Death levels them all, and sends them into the world of spirits, not as lords or vassals; not saying, This came from a mansion, and this from a cottage—He separates by a more unchangeable rule of discrimination—This was a true worshipper of God on earth; let him enter the temple above: this made the wicked his choice and his companions; let him be led forth with the workers of iniquity. Death decides the importance of every claim: your true greatness is your final; and those distinctions are alone worthy of your regard, which, being internal and spiritual, will adhere to you when you leave every thing else behind, and which will remain with you for ever.

Let us consider, farther, what results from these relations. According as you are "the children of God, or the children of the devil," you are crowned with honour, or covered with disgrace. How did David prize an alliance which made him son-in-law to the King! How vain are the people of their lineage and extraction!—But to be "sons and daughters of the Lord Almighty" confers substantial dignity, unfading honour, in comparison with which, all the glory derived from secular nobility vanishes into smoke. Upon this principle, what infamy attaches to the sinner—who has for his father the devil, a rebel, a traitor, who forfeited his inheritance, and is bound in chains of darkness, a murderer, the most accursed being in the universe!—And what renders him more worthy of reproach, and draws from us execration where otherwise we should rather show pity, is, that this is all his choice, that he is not ashamed to acknowledge the relation—every time he sins, he calls him Father—every time he swears, slanders, takes revenge, Observe, says he, my pedigree, and behold the example I copy.

Upon these connections innumerable privileges or evils depend. Are you the children of God? Heaven is your home: it is your Father's house, where are many mansions. He has in reserve for you an inheritance incorruptible

and undefiled, and that fadeth not away. And here you shall want "no good thing." "Your heavenly Father knoweth what things ye have need of before you ask him." Have you afflictions? He will pity you "as a Father pitieth his children." Have you infirmities? He will spare you, "as a man spareth his own son that serveth him." Are you to be prepared for a "high calling?" You shall "be all taught of the Lord." Do you require care and attention? The angels shall be your guardians: "are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be the heirs of salvation?" But, my dear hearers—I leave you to fill up the remaining article, and to think of the children of the wicked one. I leave you to reflect upon the miseries they endure, from their perplexities, their fears, their passions, and their pursuits in life. I leave you to look forward to the horrors which will devour them in a dying hour; to follow them HOME, and to contemplate their portion "WITH THE DEVIL AND HIS ANGELS." "The WAY of transgressors is hard." —"The END of these things is death." It is therefore, above all things, necessary for you to know in which of these classes you rank: and we are going to shew,

II. The possibility of ascertaining this. The children of God, and the children of the devil, are MANIFEST. Observe, it is not spoken of as a future, but as a present discovery—they ARE manifest. There is indeed a period of separation approaching, when those who are now blended shall be detached from each other, and mingle no more. It is called "the manifestation of the sons of God." "Every man's work shall be made manifest, for the day shall declare it." This "will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and make manifest the counsels of the hearts; and then shall every man have praise of God." "And THEN shall ye return and discern between the righteous and the wicked, between him that serveth God and him that serveth him not." But even now they are to be discovered, though not sufficiently and perfectly known. They "are manifest." You ask, To whom?

First. They are manifest to God. It is impossible to impose upon him: he "is not mocked." "His eyes are in every place, beholding the evil and the good." He "knoweth them that are his;" and he knoweth them that are not his: "neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight; but all things are naked and open unto the eyes of Him with whom we have to do."

Secondly. They are manifest to others. The tree is known by its fruit. "A good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth good things, and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart bringeth forth evil things." The partakers of divine grace are designed to be distinguished from others: they are to appear religious, as well as be so; they are to hold forth the word of life; to reprove and convince others: their light is to "shine before men, that they may see their good works, and glorify their Father who is in heaven." And surely there must be an observable difference between them and others. It is unreasonable to suppose that persons, whose principles, and aims, and rules of action, are not only so widely different, but so completely opposite, can be undistinguishingly confounded together. The difference is not indeed so conspicuous as it ought to be—but this arises from the imperfect degree of their religion: for when they live as they ought, they "declare PLAINLY that they seek a country;" "they are MANIFESTLY the epistles of Jesus Christ, known and read of all men."

Thirdly. They are manifest to themselves. It will readily be acknowledged that it is not possible for a man to be wicked without knowing it. He cannot live in the practice of sin, and in the omission of the various duties of religion; he cannot love the one, and hate the other; and not be conscious of it. But is the same true of a good man?—In reply to this, suffer me to ask two things—First. Is it not necessary for him to be able to know his character? If promises are made to a religious state, how can he claim these promises unless he can determine that he is in this state? If privileges are suspended upon duty, how can he rejoice in these privileges, unless he can determine that he has performed this duty? Secondly. What is religion? An unintelligible mystery? a charm? an operation which passes upon us and leaves no trace behind?—Is it not the most serious and impressive concern in which we were ever engaged? —Does it not excite fears and hopes, joys and sorrows, far superior to those which can arise from any other source?—Does it not involve us in a succession of difficulties, oppositions, and warfare?—Is it not a general and continued course of action? The business of life, to which we endeavour to render every thing else subordinate and subservient? Our prevailing aim! our chief care?—And is this incapable of being known? But these are the views which you should take of religion; and by these your condition is to be tried—which brings us,

III. To consider the MARKS OF DISTINCTION between these characters. "In THIS the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil."

In what? Not in temporal success. This is given or withheld too indiscriminately to allow of our knowing love or hatred: In this, "all things come alike to all: there is one event to the righteous and to the wicked. As is the good, so is the sinner; and he that sweareth, as he that feareth an oath."—

In what? Not in religious profession. Judas and Demas were both visible members of

the Church of God. There have always been many who had a name to live, while they were dead; and assumed a form of godliness, while they denied the power thereof. In our day, all this is too cheap to be valuable; too common to be distinguishing.—

In what? Not in talking—not in controversy—not in a sound creed—not in the pronunciation of the Shibboleths of a particular party.—How few, in answering this question, would have adduced THE PRACTICE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS, AND THE EXERCISE OF LOVE!—But such is the distinction of our Apostle. In THIS the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: he that DOETH NOT RIGHTEOUSNESS is not of God, neither he that LOVETH NOT HIS BROTHER.

And here we may observe, First. The manner in which the subject is expressed. It is held forth NEGATIVELY—Nor is this without design. It reminds us that omissions decide the character, even where there is no positive vice. It is the representation of the ungodly, that "he hath left off to be wise and to do good." The "unprofitable" servant is called a "wicked" one; and condemned, not because he abused his talent, but because he "hid it in a napkin." And "every tree that BRINGETH NOT FORTH GOOD FRUIT is hewn down and cast into the fire: he that doeth NOT righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth NOR his brother."

Secondly. The UNION of these excellences is worthy of our notice. We commonly see them combined in the Scripture. It is said of a good man, "He is gracious, and full of compassion, and righteous." "He hath dispersed; he hath given to the poor: his righteousness endureth for ever." It is said also, that "pure and undefiled religion before God and the father is this, to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world." And this enables us to rectify the mistake of those who are always endeavouring to separate what God has joined together. Some place their religion entirely in charity, and in one equivocal exercise of it—for all they mean by charity is alms-giving; and "this covers a multitude of sins." And some trust in themselves that they are righteous and despise others, who never seem to have read that "the end of the commandment is charity out of a pure heart, and a good conscience, and faith unfeigned;" that "charity is the bond of perfectness;" that "by this shall all men know that we are his disciples, if we love one another."

Thirdly. From these arises a CRITERION, by which we are to judge of the reality and genuineness of religion.—Not that these are the only marks which we are to employ; there are many other evidences in the Scriptures, and some of them of a more experimental kind, which we dare not depreciate—but all the rest will be vain and delusive if unaccompanied with this righteousness and this love. These are the never-failing consequences of divine grace. These enter deeply into the character. These are indispensable. By these we shall be tried hereafter—By these we should form our judgment here—The Judge himself proposes this rule: "In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: he that doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother."

Let me conclude by calling upon you to think of this—in forming a judgment of OTHERS. It is a serious thing to deprive a fellow-creature of religion, and to exclude him from eternal life; and what authority have you for doing so, if his life be exemplary, and righteousness and charity blend and prevail in his character? You say, perhaps, A man may appear to possess these things when he is a stranger to the reality, or his practice may flow from no inward or gracious principle. We allow this, and it becomes such a person to examine himself, to see whether his heart be right with God, and whether his views and his dispositions be such as the Gospel requires—But when I form a judgment concerning him, the case is materially altered. I have nothing to do with his motives; I cannot search his heart: his life and conversation only fall under my cognizance; and these are my rule—"by their fruits ye shall know them." When will this necessary difference influence the opinions of individuals? When will it be regarded by our churches in the admission of members to communion? When we find nothing objectionable in a candidate—who tells us to keep him back till we find something satisfactory? "In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: he that doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother."

Above all, do not forget this, in judging YOURSELVES. I presume you wish to know your spiritual condition, and that you are not willing to leave your eternal salvation to a mere peradventure—Perhaps I shall be saved; perhaps I shall be lost!! "Wherefore, brethren, give all diligence to make your calling and election sure." But beware how you proceed in the inquiry. Remember that there are marks and evidences which cannot lead you to a certain and safe conclusion. Do not place your confidence in speculative opinions: be not influenced by particular feelings, which having much of animal nature in them, may sometimes elevate and sometimes depress you, while your state is the same: do not wait for sudden impressions, and visionary suggestions; but remember that the witness and the seal of the Spirit are his work and influences. "Hereby we know that we

dwell in him and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit." "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his."—

Here then lay the stress. Try yours by your prevailing dispositions, and the tenour of your lives. Many, I know, deride such a standard—it is legal. They derive their assurance from some other source; especially from "a direct act of faith;" or, in other words, from a persuasion into which they work themselves, without being able to assign any reason whatever to justify it, save the consciousness itself. They not only reject good works, like others, as causes of salvation, but they reject them even as evidences too. They are not satisfied, like others, to exclude them from their justification: they exclude them even from their sanctification too, which with them means only a relative change. May you be preserved, my dear brethren, from this dreadful perversion of "ungodly men, who turn the grace of God into lasciviousness." Remember, nothing can be so awful as final deception: and nothing can more certainly expose you to it, than imagining yourselves the favourites of Heaven, while you are strangers to the renewing power of divine grace, and your tempers and lives are under none of the PURIFYING and AFFECTIONATE influences of the Gospel. "The secret of the Lord is with them that FEAR him." "The MEEK will he guide in judgment, and the MEEK will he teach his way." They, to whom there is no condemnation because they are in Christ, "WALK not after THE FLESH, but after THE SPIRIT." "He that is born of God, OVERCOMETH THE WORLD." "By this we KNOW that WE DO KNOW him, if we KEEP HIS COMMANDMENTS." These are the true sayings of God; and such is the invariable reference of the Scripture.

Suffer me then to ask you what you know of these things. Are you doing righteousness? and are you doing it—not reluctantly, but with pleasure?—not occasionally, but constantly?—not partially, but without reserve? Do you "esteem all his commandments concerning all things to be right," and do you "hate every false way?" Are your infirmities your afflictions? and do you derive from them motives to vigilance and prayer? or are you satisfied and careless under them? Do you "love your brother also?" Do you regard all your fellow-creatures and fellow Christians? And as you have opportunity, do you do good unto all men; especially unto "those who are of the household of faith?" Does this principle actuate you to afford them relief, to bear their burdens, to seek their welfare, and to serve them at the expense of self-denial?

If this be not your condition, it is well to know it; and it will be your mercy to lay it to heart. For your case, though bad, is not desperate. If you are now sensible of your sin, and really desirous of conversion, he calls, he encourages you. "Wash ye, make ye clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil, learn to do well; seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow. Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord; though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool. Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon." And what he requires, he also bestows." Read his promises in connection with his commands. While the one determines your work, the other insures you ability for the performance of it. Beseech Him to create in you a clean heart, and to renew a right spirit within you. Depend upon his grace, which will be "sufficient for you;" and "being made free from sin, and become servants to God, you will have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life. For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord." Amen.

SERMON XIX.

DOMESTIC HAPPINESS.

The voice of rejoicing is in the tabernacles of the righteous.—Psalm cxviii. 15.

NOTHING can more usefully engage our attention than Human Nature and Human Life. The proper study of mankind is Man. His origin and his end; the structure of his body and the powers of his mind; his situation and his connections; are all capable of yielding us boundless and edifying instruction.

In observing mankind, the private and familiar views of their character are by far the most curious, interesting, and profitable. The greater part of our history is composed of minute and common incidents: and little and ordinary things serve more to discover a man, and conduce more to render him useful, than splendid and rare occurrences. Abroad, a man appears cautious; at home, he is unreserved. Abroad, he is artificial; at home, he is real. Abroad, he is serviceable; at home, he is necessary. And of this we may be fully assured—that a man is in truth what he is in his own family—whether vicious or virtuous, tyrannical or mild, miserable or happy.

My Brethren, we are going to enter one of those houses, of which David speaks—a tabernacle "filled with the voice of rejoicing."

Domestic Felicity is our present subject. Let us consider two things: the IMPORTANCE, and the SOURCE of this happiness. I. WHAT MAY BE SAID IN COMMENDATION OF IT. II. WHAT WILL BE NECESSARY TO THE POSSESSION OF IT. O Thou, who hast said "It is not good for man to be alone," "God of the

families of all the earth," may thy secret be upon our tabernacles. Under the influence of thy Providence and Grace, may we derive from our unions all the blessedness they are capable of affording: and to this end, guide and sanctify our meditations.

PART I. One of the most agreeable scenes we can ever survey upon earth, is a peaceful and happy family: where friendship comes in to draw more closely the bonds of nature; where the individuals resemble the human body, and if one member suffer, all the members suffer with it, and if one member be honoured, all the members rejoice;—where every care is divided, every sorrow diminished, every joy redoubled, by discovery, by sympathy, by communion; where mutual confidence prevails, and advice, consolation, and succour are reciprocally given and received. To such a sight God himself calls our attention. "Behold how good and pleasant a thing it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!" Some things are good, but not pleasant; and some things are pleasant, but not good—Here both are combined; and the effect is fragrant as the sacred perfume, and reviving as the influences of Heaven. "It is like the precious ointment upon the head, that ran down upon the beard, even Aaron's beard; that went down to the skirts of his garments; as the dew of Hermon, and as the dew that descended upon the mountains of Zion: for there the Lord commanded his blessing, even life for evermore." Let us establish the IMPORTANCE of Domestic Happiness, by taking some particular views of its connections and influence.

And, First, We may consider it in reference to our AVOCATIONS and CARES. These are numerous and diversified, and demand relaxation and relief. Who could endure perpetual drudgery and fatigue?—and what so refreshing, so soothing, so satisfying, as the placid joys of home!

See the traveller. Does duty call him for a season to leave his beloved circle? The image of his earthly happiness continues vividly in his remembrance—it quickens him to diligence—it cheers him under difficulties—it makes him hail the hour which sees his purpose accomplished, and his face turned towards home—it communes with him as he journeys—and he hears the promise which causes him to hope, "Thou shalt know also that thy tabernacle shall be in peace; and thou shalt visit thy habitation, and not sin." Oh, the joyful re-union of a divided family; the pleasures of renewed interview and conversation, after days of absence!

Behold the man of science. He drops the labour and painfulness of research—closes his volume—smoothes his wrinkled brows—leaves his study—and unbending himself, stoops to the capacities, yields to the wishes, and mingles with the diversions of his children—And

"—He will not blush that has a father's heart,
"To take in childish play a childish part;
"But bends his sturdy back to any toy
"That youth takes pleasure in, to please his boy."

Take the man of trade. What reconciles him to the toil of business? What enables him to endure the fastidiousness and impertinence of customers? What rewards him for so many hours of tedious confinement? By-and-by the season of intercourse will arrive—he will be embosomed in the caresses of his family—he will behold the desire of his eyes, and the children of his love, for whom he resigns his ease—and in their welfare and smiles he will find his recompense.

Yonder comes the labourer. He has borne the burden and heat of the day: the descending sun has released him from his toil, and he is hastening home to enjoy repose. Half-way down the lane, by the side of which stands his cottage, his children run to meet him: one he carries, and one he leads. The companion of his humble life is ready to furnish him with his plain repast. See, his toil-worn countenance assumes an air of cheerfulness—his hardships are forgotten—fatigue vanishes—he eats, and is satisfied—the evening fair, he walks with uncovered head around his garden—enters again, and retires to rest: and "the rest of a labouring man is sweet, whether he eat little or much." Inhabitant of this lonely, lowly dwelling, who can be indifferent to thy comfort!—"Peace be to this house"—

"Let not ambition mock thy useful toil,
"Thy HOMELY joys, and destiny obscure;
"Nor grandeur hear, with a disdainful smile,
"The short and simple annals of the poor."

Secondly, We may consider this happiness in reference to the AFFLICTIONS OF LIFE. It looks like a general remedy, furnished by the kindness of Providence, to alleviate the troubles which from various quarters we unavoidably feel while passing through this world of vanity and vexation of spirit. How many little sighing vacancies does it fill up! How many cloudy nervous vapours does it chase from the mind! Whose frowns and gloom will not the mirth of a child dissipate? What corroding anxieties will not retire from the attentions of a virtuous wife! What a consolation is her gentleness! Who has not experienced its healing, enlivening influence, in the day of sickness and in the hour of depression! Is your confidence frequently checked by the baseness and dissimulation of mankind? Here your candour recovers, and you are reconciled to your fellow-creatures again. Does the behaviour of too many with whom you have to do, cherish a dissatisfaction which sours life? Here a serenity, a sweetness, spreads over the mind, from the simplicity, openness, and kindness, with which you are surrounded. Are you repulsed by others! Here you are received with open and welcome arms. Does the storm rage without? Behold an asylum

within—Here we realize an emblem of the Saviour: it says to us, "In the world ye shall have tribulation, but in me ye shall have peace." Here "the wicked cease from troubling," and here "the weary are at rest."

Thirdly. We may consider this happiness in reference to THE GOOD THINGS OF THIS LIFE. Without this, all will be insipid, all will be useless. Your titles of distinction, and your robes of office, are laid aside before you enter your own dwelling. There the senator, the minister, the lawyer, draw back; and we behold only the husband, the father, the man! There you stand only in those relations in which nature has placed you. There you feel only your personal character. What remains after these deductions are made, ascertains your value. You are to judge of your worth by the honour you command where rank does not overawe—of your importance, by the esteem and admiration you engage when deprived of all adventitious appendages—of your happiness, by the resources you possess to give cheerfulness and charms to those returning hours which no splendour gilds, which no fame inspires, and in which all the attractions of popularity fail. For what would it avail you to live in popular opinion, and to be followed with applause home to your very door—if you were then to be compelled to continue in the element of discord, the seat of strife, the house of bondage and correction? Imagine yourselves prosperous in your affairs; trade pouring in wealth, your grounds bringing forth plentifully, your cup running over—Misery under your own roof would be sufficient to canker your gold and silver; to corrupt your abundance; to embitter every pleasure; to make you groan, even on a costly sofa, "All this availeth me nothing!"—

Sufferings from strangers are less acute than from friends. David magnifies the affliction he endured by the nearness of the quarter from which it came—"It was not an enemy that reproached me; then I could have borne it: neither was it he that hated me, that did magnify himself against me; then I would have hid myself from him. But it was thou—mine equal, my guide, and my acquaintance." This circumstance gave it all the shock of surprise, all the bitterness of disappointment, all the breach of obligation. It is bad to be wounded any-where; but to be "wounded in the house of a friend" is mentioned as a peculiar aggravation. No foes are like those of "a man's household." Their situation favours hostility: they can choose the moment of attack; they can repeat the blow; they can injure imperceptibly. And what can be so dreadful as to be associated with persons from whom you cannot separate, and with whom you cannot live? What are occasional smiles, against habitual frowns? What is friendship abroad, against enmity at home? What is it for a man to be comfortable where he visits, and to be tormented where he dwells? If our happiness flow from others—and that it does in no small degree is unquestionable—it will necessarily follow, that it must be most affected by those to whom we are most seriously related, and with whom we most intimately blend—not those whom we accidentally meet, but those with whom we daily reside—not those who touch one part of our character only, but those who press us on every side.

Fourthly. Let us consider it in reference to THE SEDUCTIONS AND SNARES OF THE WORLD. From the danger of these, there is no better preservative than the attractions of a family. The more a man feels his welfare lodged in his own house, the more will he prize and love it. The more he is attached to his wife and children, the less will he risk their peace and comfort by hazardous speculations, and mad enterprises in trade. A life of innocency, regularity, and repose, in the affections of his family, will check the rovings of restless ambition, and secure him from the follies of the pride of life. "Evil communications corrupt good manners." But these pleasing cords will draw him back from "the counsel of the ungodly," "the way of sinners," "the seat of the scornful." In vain will he be tempted to go abroad for company or for pleasure, when home supplies him with both. "And what," says he, "are the amusements and dissipations of the world? I have better enjoyments already—enjoyments springing fresh from the growth, the improvement, the culture of our rising charge—from our rural walks—from our social evenings—from our reading and conversation—from our cheerful, lively, mutual devotion. Here are pleasures perpetually renewing, and which never cloy. Here are entertainments placed easily within our reach, and which require no laborious preparation, no costly arrangement. Here I acknowledge only the dominion of nature; and follow only the bias of inclination. Here I have no weaknesses to hide, no mistakes to dread. Here my gratifications are attended with no disgrace, no remorse. They leave no stain, no sting behind. I fear no reproach from my understanding, no reckoning from my conscience—my prayers are not hindered. My heart is made better—I am softened—prepared for duty—allured to the Throne of Grace. And can I be induced to exchange all this, O ye votaries of the world, for your anxieties, confusion, agitations, and expense? Shall I part with my ease and independence, for the trammels of your silly forms, the encumbrance of your fashions, the hypocrisies of your crowds? Shall I resign my freedom for the privilege of your slavery, which so often compels you to disguise your sentiments, to subdue your genuine feelings, to applaud folly, to yawn under a lethargy of pleasure, and to sigh for the hour of retirement and release?

Shall I sacrifice my innocent endearments, to pursue the fatal routine of your dissipation—the end of which is heaviness—and from which you return, deprived of seasonable rest, robbed of peace of mind, galled by reflection, disinclined to prayer, feeling the presence of God irksome, and the approach of death intolerable!—

> "Domestic Happiness, thou only bliss
> "Of Paradise that has escap'd the Fall!
> "Thou art not known where Pleasure is ador'd,—
> "That reeling goddess with a zoneless waist:
> "Forsaking thee, what shipwreck have we made
> "Of honour, dignity, and fair renown!"

—Who can help lamenting to see the valuable enjoyments of home sacrificed to a fondness for amusements, and a rage for indiscriminate intercourse with a false unfeeling world! But so it is. People were never more social, and never less domestic, than they now are.—The phrensy has reached all ranks and degrees. Our females are no longer keepers at home. Even children are led into these circles of infatuation, and made to despise the simple and natural manners of youth. From mansions and shops and common dwellings we see increasing numbers pouring forth to balls, and assemblies, and routs, and concerts, and public spectacles, and theatrical entertainments: every evening has some foreign claim.

"Who will shew me any good?"—is the cry. The world passing along hears it, and says, Follow me—emulate this splendour—mix with this throng—pursue these diversions. We comply. We run, and we run in vain—the prize was nigh us when we began; but our folly drew us away from it. Let us return home, and we shall find it. Let us remember, that happiness prefers calmness to noise, and the shades to publicity; that it depends more upon things cheap and common, than upon things expensive and singular: that it is not an exotic which we are to import from the ends of the earth, but a plant which grows in our own field, and in our own garden. Every man may be made happy, if you could induce him to make a proper estimate of happiness; if you could keep him from judging after outward appearances; if you could persuade him to stoop, rather than to aspire; to kneel, rather than to fly. To confine us to our respective stations, God has wisely rendered happiness only attainable in them: were it placed—not in the way of duty, but on the other side of the boundary—the very position would lead us astray, and seduce us to transgress.—But home is not always heaven, nor is domestic life necessarily productive of domestic happiness. Hence it becomes needful,

PART II. To open its SOURCES, and examine on what it DEPENDS.

It does not depend upon RANK and AFFLUENCE. It is confined to no particular condition: the servant may enjoy it, as well as the master; the mechanic, as well as the nobleman. It exhilarates the cottage, as well as the palace. What am I saying? What says common opinion? Does it not invariably associate more enjoyment with the lowly roof, than with the towering mansion? Ask those who have risen from inferior life, whether their satisfaction has increased with their circumstances; whether they have never advanced to the brow of the eminence they have ascended, and looking down sighed, "Ah! happy vale, from how much was I sheltered while I was in thee!" There can be indeed but one opinion concerning the wretchedness of those who have not the necessaries of life. But "Nature is content with little, and Grace with less." "Better is a dinner of herbs where love is, than a stalled ox and hatred therewith." "Better is a dry morsel and quietness therewith, than a house full of sacrifices and strife." This blessedness then results not from worldly things—and we mention this the more readily, because some seem afraid to enter a state honourable in all, because they have before them no openings of wealth—others dread the increase of children, as an accession of misery—while many are waiting for a larger fortune, a more spacious house, and more splendid furniture, before they can even THINK of enjoying themselves.

We may also observe, that some individuals seem much more qualified to enjoy this happiness than others. Some have little taste for any thing. They are made up of stupidities: they have eyes, but see not; ears, but hear not. They are the automatons of nature; the machines of Providence; doing the work which the constitution of the world requires of them, devoid of any lively emotions. If they ever feel, it is only from the impression of something tumultuous and violent—if the are ever pleased, it is only with factitious joys. But others are full of life and sensibility They are susceptible of delicate impressions: they love every thing tranquil; relish every thing simple; enjoy every thing natural; and are touched and dissolved by a thousand pleasing circumstances which convey nothing to others.

There are, however, some things which have an indispensable influence in producing and maintaining the welfare of families, which fall more properly under our cultivation. Order—Good Temper—Good Sense—Religious Principles. These will bless thy dwelling, and fill thy "tabernacle with the voice of rejoicing."

First. Without ORDER you can never rule well your own house. "God is not the God of confusion." He loves order: order pervades all his works. He overlooks nothing. "He calleth the stars by their names;" "He numbereth the hairs of our head." "He appointeth the moon for seasons; and the sun knoweth his going down." There is no discord, no clashing, in all the immense, the

amazing whole! He has interposed his authority, and enjoined us "to do every thing decently, and in order." And this command is founded in a regard to our advantage. It calls upon you to lay down rules, and to walk by them; to assign every thing its proper place—its allowance of time—its degree of importance; to observe regularity in your meals—in your devotions—in your expenses. From order spring frugality, economy, charity. From order result beauty, harmony, concurrence. Without order there can be no government, no happiness. Peace flies from confusion. Disorder entangles all our affairs; hides from us the end, and keeps from us the clew—we lose self-possession; and become miserable—because perplexed, hurried, oppressed, easily provoked.

Secondly. Many things will arise to try your TEMPER: and he is unqualified for social life who has no rule over his own spirit; "who cannot bear," to use the words of a good writer, "the frailties of his fellow-creatures with common charity, and the vexations of life with common patience." Peter, addressing wives, reminds them that "the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit is in the sight of God of great price." And Solomon often mentions the opposite blemish in illustrating the female character. "It is better to dwell in a corner of the house-top, than with a brawling woman in a wide house." "The contentions of a wife are a continual dropping"—and so on. We should deem it invidious to exemplify this imperfection in one sex only—we would address you equally; and call upon you, as you value a peaceful abode, to maintain a control over your tempers. Beware of passion: say little when under irritation; turn aside—take time to reflect and to cool—a word spoken unadvisedly with your lips may produce a wound which weeks cannot heal. "I would reprove thee," said the philosopher, "were I not angry"—It is a noble suggestion. Apply it in your reprehension of servants and correction of children. But there is something against which you should be more upon your guard than occasional sallies of passion—I mean habitual pettishness. The former may be compared to a brisk shower which is soon over; the latter, to a sleet drizzling rain driving all the day long. The mischief which is such a disturber of social enjoyment, is not the anger which is lengthened into malice, or vented in revenge; but that which oozes out in constant fretfulness, murmuring, and complaint: it is that which renders a man not formidable, but troublesome; it is that which converts him, not into a tiger, but into a gnat. Good humour is the cordial, the balm of life. The possessor of it spreads satisfaction wherever he comes, and he partakes of the pleasure he gives. Easy in himself, he is seldom offended with those around him. Calm and placid within, every thing without wears the most favourable appearance; while the mind, agitated by peevishness or passion, like a ruffled pool, even reflects every agreeable and lovely image false and distorted.

Thirdly. The influence and advantage of GOOD SENSE are incalculable. What streams, what vessels, are the noisy! The shallow, the empty. Who are the unyielding! The ignorant, who mistake obstinacy for firmness. Who are the infallible? They who have not reflection enough to see how liable and how likely we are to err; they who cannot comprehend how much it adds to a man's wisdom to discover, and to his humility to acknowledge, a fault. Good sense will preserve us from censoriousness; will lead us to distinguish circumstances; to draw things from the dark situation of prejudice which rendered them frightful, that we may candidly survey them in open day. Good sense will keep us from looking after visionary perfection—The infirmities I behold are not peculiar to my connexions; others, if equally near, would betray the same: universal excellence is unattainable; no one can please in every thing. And who am I, to demand a freedom from imperfections in others, while I am encompassed with infirmities myself?" Good sense will lead us to study dispositions, peculiarities, accommodations: to weigh consequences; to determine what to observe and what to pass by; when to be immoveable and when to yield. Good sense will produce good manners; will keep us from taking freedoms and handling things roughly; for love is delicate, confidence is tender. Good sense will never agitate claims of superiority; it will teach us to "submit ourselves one to another, in the fear of God." Good sense will lead persons to regard their own duties, rather than to recommend those of others.

Fourthly. We must go beyond all this, and remind you of those RELIGIOUS PRINCIPLES by which you are to be governed. These are to be found in the word of God; and as many as walk according to this rule, mercy and peace shall be upon them. God has engaged that if you will walk in his way, you shall find rest unto your souls. If it be said—There are happy families without religion—I would answer, First, There is a difference between appearances and reality. Secondly, If we believe the Scripture, this is impossible—"the way of transgressors is hard: there is no peace, saith my God, unto the wicked." Thirdly, Religion secures those duties, upon the performance of which the happiness of households depends. Would any man have reason to complain of servants, of children, or of any other relation—if they were all influenced by the spirit, and regulated by the dictates of the Gospel! Much of religion lies in the discharge of these relative duties—and to enforce these, religion brings forward motives the most pow-

erful, and always binding—calls in conscience, and God, and heaven, and hell. Fourthly, Religion attracts the Divine blessing—and all we possess or enjoy depends upon its smiles. God can elevate or sink us in the esteem of others: he can send us business or withhold it; he can command or forbid thieves to rob, and flames to devour us; he can render all we have satisfying, or distasteful—and they that honour him he will honour. "The house of the wicked shall be overthrown, but the tabernacle of the upright shall flourish. The curse of the Lord is in the house of the wicked; but he blesseth the habitation of the just." Finally, Religion prepares us for all events. If we succeed—it keeps our prosperity from destroying us. If we suffer—it preserves us from fainting in the day of adversity. It turns our losses into gains; it exalts our joys into praises; it makes prayers of our sighs—and, in all the uncertainties of time and changes of the world, it sheds on the mind a "peace which passeth all understanding." It unites us to each other—not only as creatures, but as Christians; not only as strangers and pilgrims upon earth, but as heirs of glory, honour, and immortality——For you must separate—it is useless to keep back the mortifying truth—It was the condition upon which your union was formed. O man! it was a mortal finger upon which you placed the ring, vain emblem of perpetuity. O woman! it was a dying hand that imposed it. After so many mutual and growing attachments, to separate!—What is to be done here! O Religion, Religion, come, and relieve us, in a case where every other assistance fails. Come, and teach us not to wrap up our chief happiness in the creature. Come, and bend our wills to the pleasure of the Almighty, and enable us to say, "It is the Lord! let him do what seemeth him good: the Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; and blessed be the name of the Lord." Come, and tell us that they are disposed of infinitely to their advantage; that the separation is temporary; that a time of re-union will come; that we shall see their faces and hear their voices again.—

Take two Christians, who have been walking together, like "Zechariah and Elisabeth, in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord, blameless." Is the connection dissolved by death! No. We take the Bible along with us; and inscribe on their tomb, "Pleasant in life, and in death not divided." Is the one removed before the other? He becomes an attraction to the other; he draws him forward, and is waiting to "receive him into everlasting habitations."—Let us suppose a pious family re-uniting together, after following each other successively down to the grave. How unlike every present meeting! Here our intercourse is chilled with the certainty of separation: there we shall meet, to part no more; we shall be for ever with each other, and for ever with the Lord. Now affliction often enters our circle, and the distress of one is the concern of all: then we shall "rejoice with them that rejoice," but not "weep with them that weep;" for "all tears shall be wiped from our eyes, and the days of our mourning shall be ended."

Come then, my dear hearers, and invite the religion of the blessed Jesus—this one thing needful—this universal benefactor of mankind. It has "the promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come"—It secures our individual and our relative happiness—It brings peace into our bosoms, and joy into our dwellings. Let us resolve to pursue it ourselves; let us enforce it upon our connections. Let us dedicate our tabernacles to God; offer the morning and evening sacrifice of prayer and of praise: and whatever be the determination of others, let each of us say, for ourselves, "As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord."

SERMON XX.

HAPPINESS IN DEATH.

For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.—2 Peter i. 11.

My Brethren! Among the various motives with which Revelation abounds, there are none more solemn and impressive than those which are derived from Death. Hence the sacred writers often refer to it. They remind us of the suddenness of its arrival. They forewarn us of the nearness of its approach. They also intimate the importance of its consequences, as terminating this state of trial, sealing up our characters, and transmitting them to the judgment of the great day, to be opened and published before an assembled world.

The Apostle Peter urges the MANNER of our dying—He would have us die WELL—not only in a state of salvation, but of peace—and triumph. "So an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." To do justice to this subject, it will be necessary to consider three things. I. The state to which the Christian looks forward—"the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." II. The mode of his admission—"an entrance ministered abundantly." III. The condition on which the privilege depends—it is the consequence of something clearly implied. "So—SO AN ENTRANCE SHALL BE MINISTERED UNTO YOU ABUNDANTLY INTO THE EVERLASTING KINGDOM OF OUR LORD AND SAVIOUR JESUS CHRIST."

I. Christians, We know very little of "the hope which is laid up for us in heaven:" it is "the glory which shall be revealed in us." While we are in this weak state of flesh and blood, the full disclosure would be too dazzling for the feeble eye. It would also, by making too strong an impression, operate injuriously, unhinging us from our present connections, and depriving those concerns which demand a subordinate share of attention, of all power to strike and engage our minds. "We walk by faith, not by sight"—but "we know in part." We have some representations of our future blessedness, accommodated to our faculties, and derived from scenes with which we are familiar.

It is a KINGDOM—a state of royal empire, expanding over a better, a heavenly country—where there is no curse—whose laws are equity and perfection—whose riches and honours and resources are infinite—whose subjects are all wise and good—living together as friends—all princes themselves—all happy—escaped from the troubles of life, the infirmities and diseases of body, the distresses and accusations of conscience, the remains of ignorance and of sin—and innumerable vexations, which now make us groan, and long to emigrate thither. Two things are spoken of this kingdom, which deserve remark.

The first concerns its permanency and duration—It is "the EVERLASTING kingdom of our Lord and Saviour." Every thing here is perishable and transitory. We tremble to look at our possessions and enjoyments, lest we should see them in motion, spreading their wings to flee away. Many already, in talking of their comforts, are compelled to go back—"I HAD a husband—children—health—affluence—and I said, I shall die in my nest."—

As it is with individuals and families, so it is with communities. "The fashion of this world passeth away." Where now is the city whose top was to reach to heaven and defy a second flood? What have become of the kingdoms of the earth, whose fame fills the page of history? The Assyrian, Persian, Grecian, Roman empires arose, astonished mankind for a season, and disappeared. And not only the most magnificent and durable productions of human power and skill, but even the established frame of nature, shall be demolished. "The heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat; the earth also, and the works that are therein, shall be burnt up. Nevertheless, we, according to his promise, look for new heavens, and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness"—Then follows a kingdom not marred by sin, not liable to declension or change. A kingdom which cannot be shaken, secure from internal decay and external violence. A kingdom, prepared from the foundation of the world, and which shall survive its dissolution; and, having seen the sun turned into darkness and the moon into blood, shall flow on through eternal ages.

The greater any good is which we possess, the more does it awaken our concern, and the more anxious are we to inquire after its security and tenure. But here is no room for apprehension—the happiness is as certain as it is excellent, as durable as it is vast. And the Scripture never overlooks this important consideration. Is it "meat?" It "endureth to everlasting life." Is it a "treasure?" "Moth and rust cannot corrupt, nor thieves break through and steal." Is it a "crown of glory?" It "fadeth not away." Is it a "house?" It is "a building of God, not made with hands, eternal, in the heavens." Is it a "city?" It is "a city which hath foundations, whose builder and whose maker is God." Is it a "kingdom?" It is "everlasting."

Behold the second circumstance with regard to this blessed state. It is "the everlasting kingdom OF OUR LORD AND SAVIOUR JESUS CHRIST." And what means this relation! It is surely designed to distinguish him from a mere possessor, and to intimate peculiar prerogative, residence, administration. It is his by claim. As the Son of God, he is "heir of all things: being made so much better than the angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they. For unto which of the angels said he, at any time, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee? And again, I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son? And again, when he bringeth in the first-begotten into the world, he saith, And let all the angels of God worship him. And of the angels he saith, Who maketh his angels spirits, and his ministers a flame of fire. But unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever; a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom: thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows." For under another view he acquired it as the reward of his obedience and sufferings. "For unto the angels hath he not put in subjection the world to come, of which we speak. But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour." "Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God; but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men; and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: that, at the name of Jesus, every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord,

to the glory of God the Father." He has now the disposal of the offices and privileges of the empire among his faithful followers. This was surely the idea of the dying thief, when he prayed, "Lord, remember me when thou comest into THY kingdom;" and of Paul, when he said, "and the Lord shall deliver me from every evil work, and preserve me unto HIS heavenly kingdom." He is the Sovereign; and there he rules—not, as here, "in the midst of his enemies"—No treason, no sedition, no disaffection there. All are adoring and praising him—"Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing." There he reigns immediately —always in view—and accessible to all. There he appears in our nature—the principle, the image, the pledge of our glory and happiness. He has taken possession in our name; and is preparing a place for us; and will by-and-by receive us to HIMSELF, that where HE is, there WE may be also.

It has been often said, "that however we may differ from each other, we all hope for the same heaven." But nothing can be more untrue. The believer in Jesus, who loves him above all, and places the whole of his happiness in him—he—and he alone really desires the heaven of the Bible: a pure, spiritual, CHRISTIAN heaven, the essence of which is the presence and glory of the Redeemer. This is the heaven he demanded for all his followers—"Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am, to behold my glory." This is the heaven Paul desired for himself: "I long to depart, to be with Christ, which is far better." And such is the disposition of every true follower of the Lord Jesus. "This is enough—this is the heaven of Heaven—there I shall see Him who is altogether lovely. There I shall behold Him who gave his life a ransom for me. There I shall approach the Lamb in the midst of the throne, who will feed me and lead me to living fountains of water. There I shall be like him; for I shall see him as he is. There I shall be for ever with the Lord."—Having considered the state to which we are encouraged to look forward, let us observe,

II. The desirable mode of admission. And here we read of an ENTRANCE—MINISTERED—ABUNDANTLY.

What is this ENTRANCE? Unquestionably —Death. "By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death hath passed upon all men, because all have sinned." With two exceptions, this has been the way of all the earth. "Enoch was translated, that he should not see death." "Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven"—They departed, without the separation of soul and body—and knew nothing of "pains and groans and dying strife." They were not unclothed, but clothed upon: and in them, mortality was swallowed up of life. But only one passage remains for us: and this—not an easy and an alluring, but a rough and a gloomy one. A messenger brings us to God; but it is "the King of Terrors:" we enter the land flowing with milk and honey; but it is through "the valley of the shadow of death."

But you should remember that your entrance into the invisible world is ADMINISTERED. "Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and one of them shall not fall to the ground without your Father. Fear not therefore: ye are of more value than many sparrows." "The" very "hairs of your head are all numbered." "Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints:" and he orders all the circumstances attending it. Not only is the will of God concerned in the general sentence of mortality pronounced upon us, but death always receives a particular commission from him. Hence, in a similar condition, one is taken and another left. The circumstance of time is fixed by him: "the number of our months is with him." The place is determined by his purpose. The means and the manner of our removal are disposed by his pleasure. Whether we are to die young or old; whether we are to be seized at home or abroad; whether we shall be carried off by accidents or disease; whether we shall expire slowly or suddenly—are secrets impenetrable to us; but all is wisely and kindly regulated by his providence.

The death of some is distinguished by indulgences and honours not vouchsafed to all: and this is what the Apostle means by an entrance ministered unto us ABUNDANTLY. For all do not enter alike. Some, shipwrecked, are washed by the surge half dead on the shore, or reach it clinging terrified to a plank; others, with crowded sails and with a preserved cargo of spices and perfumes, beautifully, gallantly enter the desired haven. Some are scarcely saved; and some are more than conquerors. A triumph was not decreed to every Roman general upon his return to the capital. Can we imagine that the martyrs issuing from the flames, entered heaven like a Christian who had been often tempted to conceal his religion to escape a sneer or a frown? We may observe a remarkable diversity even in the deaths of common believers. Some die only safe; while their state is unknown to themselves, and suspected by others. In some, hope and fear alternately prevail. Some feel a peace which passeth all understanding —while some exult with a joy unspeakable and full of glory. And in these is fulfilled the language of the promise, "With gladness and rejoicing shall they be brought: they shall enter into the King's palace." They are "joyful in glory" before they have reached it, and "shout aloud upon their" dying "beds." God deals with them as he did with Moses, when he led him to the top of Pisgah

and gave him a prospect of the Holy Land: only with this difference—his view was a substitute for possession; while their look is to render the passage easier, and to make them hasten to the goodly mountain of Lebanon. Such a death the Apostle valued more than the continuance of life: all his concern was to "finish his course with joy:" and the assured hope of this would animate thousands, and reconcile them to all the trials they endure. It is desirable and valuable, both with regard to themselves and others.

They will need it themselves. It is a new—a trying—and—an awful thing to die. They will find dying to be work enough, without having doubts and fears to encounter. The distresses of life admit of alleviation and diversion—but it is otherwise with the pains of death. Worldly pursuits are broken off, sensual pleasures are excluded, conversation is difficult, friends are anxious and fearful; and if you have no joy springing up in you from a spiritual source, your condition is deplorable and desperate. Would you die in darkness, or in the light of God's countenance? Would you enter another world, ignorant whether you shall step into endless happiness or misery; or depart, able to say, as you look back with a smile upon survivors, "Whither I go ye know, and the way ye know?"

You should long for this also on the behalf of others. This is the last time you can do any thing in serving God and your generation; but by this you may be rendered peculiarly useful. Your dying looks and your dying words may make impressions which shall never be erased. Some who have refused to hear sermons, have been convinced by a dying bed. The religion which can produce such patience and resignation, courage and joy, has become honourable in their esteem. They have admired and resolved to follow a Master, who does not cast off his servants when their strength faileth, and who blesses them with strong consolation when others are left without support: the evidence is too plain to be denied, too solemn to be ridiculed.—Such a death has also often been profitable to those who were already in the way to Zion, but walking with trembling steps, and often fearing how it would go with them at last: when they have seen the grace of God, they have been glad, their ardour has rekindled, their courage has been renewed—they have said, "Why may it not be so with me? The Lord is my helper; I will not fear." When Doctor Rivet was labouring under the disease which ended in his dissolution, he said—"Let all who come to inquire after me, be allowed to see me—I ought to be an example of religion, dying as well as living; and Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life or by death."—"Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his."—But in order to this, it will be necessary for us,

III. To examine the condition upon which this privilege is suspended, and which is obviously here implied—"For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." There are two things which it will be proper for us briefly to premise. First, There are cases in which Christians may be affected all through life by bodily causes, having something morbid and atrabilarious in their constitution, which subjects them to various changes and depressions with which religion has no concern—There is no reasoning from these instances. Secondly, It is not for us to determine what God may do in particular cases: for he does not always deal with his people according to their desert: he is slow to anger, and ready to forgive—Nevertheless he has given us a rule by which we are to walk; and has wisely established a connection between duty and privilege. And I am persuaded that there is not an individual in this assembly, who would not rationally and Scripturally expect to find one course of life attended with a more favoured and happy death than another: nor can there be much dispute in determining the nature of this course; this being one of those cases in which men are very nearly agreed. It would be well if their knowledge and their practice equally harmonized; but, alas! what ignorance and infidelity cannot make us deny, sin and the world can make us neglect! This course requires—That you should habituate yourselves to familiar thoughts of Death.—This will dissipate the terrors which arise from distance and imagination; this will break the force of surprise; this will turn a frightful precipice into a gentle slope. He who can say, "I die daily," is the most likely to die comfortably. It requires—that you should loosen your affections from the world—A gentle breeze, a slight effort will bring down the tree around which you have dug, and whose larger roots you have cut off. And the less powerfully you are attached to earthly things, the more easy will be your separation from them. This is the man to die, whose mind advances with his time; who feels himself a stranger and a pilgrim upon earth; whose treasure is in heaven; and who views dying as only going home. It requires—That you should obtain and preserve the evidences of pardon—without these you cannot be fearless and tranquil in the near views of eternity—since "after death is the judgment." It requires you to keep a conscience void of offence towards God and towards man. Is he in a condition to die, who has lived in the practice of some known sin, and in the omission of some known duty? Is he in a condition to die, who has worn a mask of hypocrisy, which will now drop off, and expose

him in his true character? Is he in a condition to die, who by artifice, unfair dealing, grinding the faces of the poor, has amassed gain, which will dishonour him if restored, and condemn him if retained? It requires—us to live in the exercise of brotherly kindness and charity. Of all we do for Him, nothing pleases him more than this: this we know he will acknowledge in the day of judgment—and why not in the day of death? "Blessed is he that considereth the poor: the Lord will deliver him in time of trouble." "The Lord will strengthen him upon the bed of languishing: thou wilt make all his bed in his sickness." Many are praying for him—the widows and the fatherless cry, and their cry entereth "the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth." It requires—an attention to religion in your families. I pity that father, who will be surrounded when he dies with children, whose minds he never informed, whose dispositions he never curbed, whose manners he never guarded; who sees one an infidel, another a profligate, and all irreligious. I know that you are not answerable for the conversion of your offspring, but you are responsible for the use of all proper means; and if these have been neglected, you will plant your dying pillow with thorns: whereas, if you have seriously and perseveringly attended to them, your dying repose shall not be disturbed by want of success; but you shall be able to say, "Although my house be not so with God, yet hath he made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and sure; for this is all my salvation and all my desire; although he make it not to grow."

In a word, it requires you to live in the strenuous cultivation of practical and progressive religion. "And besides this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue, knowledge; and to knowledge, temperance; and to temperance, patience; and to patience, godliness; and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, charity. For if these things be in you, and abound, th y make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see far off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins. Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure; for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall;—for so, an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."

My brethren; If there be such differences among Christians in dying, we may be assured that there will be inequalities in heaven. If there be such diversities in the order of their admission, who can suppose they will all be upon a level as soon as they have entered? There are various ranks and degrees among our fellow-servants and elder brethren—thrones and dominions, principalities and powers. The works of God on earth and in the visible heavens are distinguished by a pleasing variety: "All flesh is not the same flesh: but there is one kind of flesh of men, another flesh of beasts, another of fishes, and another of birds. There are also celestial bodies, and bodies terrestrial: but the glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another. There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars: for one star differeth from another star in glory. So also is the resurrection of the dead." Let us therefore "look to ourselves, that we receive a full reward."

It is impossible to close, without asking you, in the presence of God—What preparation have you made for a dying hour? Surely you do not expect to live here always; you know that you must die; and if ever you think of it, you cannot help wishing to die in peace. But can you hope to conclude in comfort a life passed in guilt? "Be not deceived: God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh, shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit, shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting." You are not in a state to die even SAFELY. You have only heard what you are to lose. To you NO entrance will be administered.

But I address myself to Christians; and call upon you to think much of a dying hour. The care of dying well, will influence you to live so. Value things according to the views you will have of them when you look back from the borders of the grave. You see, the blessedness we speak of does not depend upon genius, learning, earthly riches, worldly distinctions. But some things have a favourable influence over a dying hour: value, select, pursue these. By such a death, regulate your plans of living. Be piously ambitious: seek after spiritual prosperity: be rich in faith: be filled with the fruits of righteousness: give all diligence to the full assurance of hope unto the end.—Happy is the man who is no longer "in bondage through fear of death;" who can think with composure of "the house appointed for all living;" who can spend an hour among the tombs, and say, "Well, hither I have no reluctance to come when my heavenly Father sends the summons. I know in whom I have believed; and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed to him against that day."—"O Death! where is thy sting! O Grave! where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law; but thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."

SERMON XXI.

SERVICE DONE FOR GOD REWARDED.

And it came to pass in the seven and twentieth year, in the first month, in the first day of the month, the word of the Lord came unto me, saying, Son of man, Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon caused his army to serve a great service against Tyrus: every head was made bald, and every shoulder was peeled: yet had he no wages, nor his army, for Tyrus, for the service that he had served against it: therefore thus saith the Lord God; Behold, I will give the land of Egypt unto Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon; and he shall take her multitude, and take her spoil, and take her prey; and it shall be the wages for his army. I have given him the land of Egypt for his labour wherewith he served against it, because they wrought for me, saith the Lord God.—Ezekiel xxix. 17—20.

"Surely the Lord will do nothing, but he revealeth his secret unto his servants the prophets." When he would bring in the flood upon the ungodly world, he divulged his purpose to Noah. From Abraham he would not hide the thing he was about to do, in the destruction of the cities of the plain. When by his judgments he resolved to punish the house of Eli, he lodged the heavy tidings with Samuel—To Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel, he announced the revolutions and doom of the surrounding nations.

Now this was done—first, for the honour of these distinguished servants of God, by shewing the confidential friendship with which he favoured them—and secondly, for the conviction and confirmation of others. The truth of these predictions would increasingly appear in their successive accomplishments. The inference was obvious and undeniable. —Who could draw back the veil which conceals futurity? Who could pierce through the obscurity of ages and generations, and foretell things to come? He, and He alone, "who declareth the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done; saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure."

The burden of the prophecy which is to engage your present thoughts, is the donation of Egypt to the king of Babylon for his trouble in taking Tyre.

Tyre was a place famous for navigation, merchandise, and riches. Our prophet calls it "the mart of nations," and enumerates the various countries in whose commerce it traded. But trade is perpetually changing its residence. It passed from Tyre to Alexandria, from Alexandria to Venice, from Venice to Antwerp, from Antwerp to Amsterdam, from Amsterdam to London. And if there be any truth in history—an abundance of commerce has generally, if not universally, proved the ruin of the countries in which it has prevailed. It pours in wealth—wealth is favourable to every species of wickedness—and wickedness, by its natural tendency, as well as by the curse of God, brings in calamity and misery.—So it was with Tyre. Luxury, pride, insolence, licentiousness of manners, indifference to the distresses of others, presumptuous confidence in their resources—all these abounded among them, and foreboded the evil day—"Therefore thus saith the Lord God; Behold, I am against thee, O Tyrus, and will cause many nations to come up against thee, as the sea causeth his waves to come up. For, behold, I will bring upon Tyrus Nebuchadrezzar, king of Babylon, a king of kings, from the north, with horses, and with chariots, and with horsemen, and companies, and much people. He shall slay with the sword thy daughters in the field: and he shall make a fort against thee, and cast a mount against thee, and lift up the buckler against thee. And he shall set engines of war against thy walls, and with his axes he shall break down thy towers. And I will make thee like the top of a rock: thou shalt be a place to spread nets upon—I the Lord have spoken it."—

This prediction was now accomplished—Tyre had fallen—but not without immense labour and loss. Thirteen years Nebuchadrezzar besieged it with a large army. Toiling for so many seasons, night and day, summer and winter, the soldiers endured incredible hardships—"every head was bald—every shoulder was peeled." For the walls were deemed impregnable, and the place being open to the sea, could easily receive fresh supplies of provision and of men from the various colonies which they had in the Mediterranean. —But its fate was determined.—At length a breach was made; and further resistance became useless—But numbers of the Tyrians escaped in their vessels, after taking their most valuable articles on board, and throwing the rest into the sea—so that Nebuchadrezzar, when he entered, instead of a rich booty, to indemnify him for his losses, found nothing but empty houses and ruins. This was no small mortification: Ezekiel is therefore commissioned to insure him the acquisition of a country, where he would find less difficulty and more recompense; a country abounding in corn, in cattle, and all kinds of riches. "And it came to pass in the seven and twentieth year, in the first month, in the first day of the month, the word of the Lord came unto me, saying, Son of man, Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon caused his army to serve a great service against Tyrus: every head was made bald, and every shoulder was peeled: yet had he no wages, nor his army, for Tyrus, for the service that he had served against it: therefore thus saith the Lord God; Behold, I will

give the land of Egypt unto Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon; and he shall take her multitude, and take her spoil, and take her prey; and it shall be the wages for his army. I have given him the land of Egypt for his labour wherewith he served against it, because they wrought for me, saith the Lord God."

These words furnish us with three reflections. I. The disposal of states and nations is the work of Divine Providence. II. Men may serve God really, when they do not serve him by design. III. We shall never be losers by any thing we do for God.

I. THE DISPOSAL OF STATES AND NATIONS IS THE WORK OF DIVINE PROVIDENCE. This Daniel confessed, when he said, "Blessed be the name of God for ever and ever: for wisdom and might are his: and he changeth the times and the seasons: he removeth kings, and he setteth up kings: he giveth wisdom to the wise, and knowledge to them that know understanding." He rejected Saul, and gave the kingdom to David, an obscure shepherd. He took the ten tribes from Rehoboam, and transferred them to Jeroboam, originally an inferior officer in his own service. It was occasioned, indeed, by the imprudence of the king, in refusing the advice of the old men, and following the rash counsel of the young; but "the thing," so it is expressly remarked, "the thing was of the Lord." Thus He takes Egypt from Pharaoh-hophra, and adds it to the possessions and territories of the Babylonish monarch. Nothing could be a greater judgment upon a country, than to be laid open to the horrors of invasion, and delivered up to the despotism of an unprincipled tyrant, who considered them as his property, used them as his tools, degraded them as his vassals, disposed of them as his victims—so that "whom he would he slew, and whom he would he kept alive"—But "the Lord gave it to him."

Do we examine this dispensation in reference to the authority of God?—It is unquestionably his prerogative: he has a right to do what he will with his own. "I have made the earth, the man and the beast that are upon the ground, by my great power and by my out-stretched arm, and have given it unto whom it seemeth meet unto me."

Do we consider it in connection with the Divine power?—Nothing is too hard for the Lord; no difficulties lie in his way; he moves —and valleys rise, and mountains become a plain: "all nations before him are as nothing, and are counted to him less than nothing and vanity." "When he giveth quietness, then who can make trouble? and when he hideth his face, then who can behold him? whether it be done against a nation, or against a man only."

Do we survey the relation it has to the righteousness of God?—He is the moral governor of the universe, "who renders to every man according to their works." Individuals can be rewarded or punished in another world, but communities are judged only in this. Here he deals with them in a way of retribution; and in none of his proceedings is he arbitrary: there is always a cause. "Righteousness exalteth a nation, and sin is a reproach to any people." "O house of Israel, cannot I do with you as this potter? saith the Lord. Behold, as the clay is in the potter's hand, so are ye in my hand, O house of Israel. At what instant I shall speak concerning a nation and concerning a kingdom, to pluck up, and to pull down, and to destroy it; if that nation, against whom I have pronounced, TURN FROM THEIR EVIL, I will repent of the evil that I thought to do unto them. And at what instant I shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to build and to plant it; if IT DO EVIL in my sight, that it obey not my voice, then I will repent of the good wherewith I said I would benefit them."

Do we think of it in application to our own times?—We should remember that it has nothing in it peculiar or uncommon; that persons in former ages are to be viewed as fair specimens of human nature in general, and the dealings of Divine Providence with them as holding forth the unchangeable nature and perfections of God; that "he is the governor among the nations" now, as much as in the days of Ezekiel; and that were a history of modern events to be written by inspiration, we should find him "working all things after the counsel of his own will," and read it recorded, that "out of him came forth the corner, out of him the nail, out of him the battle bow, out of him every oppressor together."

And, my brethren, this is precisely the view we should endeavour to take of these changes. A Christian should be wiser than other men, and where they can only find instruments, he should recognize a Divine agency: where they only see a creature, he should acknowledge a God, "of whom, and through whom, and to whom, are all things." When we view this sovereign Cause of all events, the face of the universe is changed; the earth instantly becomes a place of equity and order; the history of the world is the history of God, and is worth reading. Unless we fix upon this principle, we shall be in danger of debasing ourselves by joining in worldly parties and political rage; of feeling too much confidence in one class of men, and too much fear of another; or prescribing the course of events, and suffering disappointment and mortification when our favourite measures are subverted. We have seen how strangely unanswerable to any human expectation various occurrences have proved; how little, comparatively, there is in the various modifications of civil policy deserving the anxiety of a Christian; how much, under all forms of government, the passions of men remain the same. A higher remedy is necessary, and it

is to be found in the Gospel only; and by their favourable bearings on the diffusion of this blessing it becomes us principally to estimate all public revolutions. This is the end God has ultimately in view, and he is able to accomplish it. He is "wonderful in counsel, and excellent in working." He is doing all things, and he is "doing all things well." Let us not make our ignorance the standard of his perfection.—He will deduce order from confusion, and good from evil. "He stilleth the raging of the sea, and the tumult of the people." "The Lord reigneth; let the earth rejoice, let the multitude of the isles be glad thereof." "Surely, O Lord, the wrath of man shall praise thee; the remainder of wrath shalt thou restrain." Which leads us to observe,

II. That men may serve God really, when they do not serve him by design. Nebuchadrezzar and his army, says God, "wrought for me." "O Assyrian, the rod of mine anger, and the staff in their hand is mine indignation. I will send him against an hypocritical nation, and against the people of my wrath will I give him a charge, to take the spoil, and to take the prey, and to tread them down like the mire of the streets. Howbeit he meaneth not so, neither doth his heart think so; but it is in his heart to destroy and to cut off nations not a few."—The men obeyed their commanders; their commanders obeyed Nebuchadrezzar; Nebuchadrezzar obeyed his pride, ambition, avarice, revenge—and his pride, ambition, avarice, and revenge obeyed the will of Heaven. He knew nothing of God; but God knew him, and "girded and guided him." He had one end in view, and God another—but, in taking a wicked city, he was fulfilling the word of truth, and inflicting the judgments of Heaven—therefore says God, "he wrought for me." And what do we learn from hence,—but that great men, bad men, the worst of men, while pursuing their enterprises—are subject to a Divine control—are impelled in a prescribed direction—are directed to a destined mark?

What a strange scene was here—the king of Babylon and his hosts arming at the Divine call, and marching forth to subdue countries, to plunder provinces, to demolish cities—and in all this, doing God service! But God can turn things from their natural tendency into opposite channels—he can make men act necessarily, while they are acting voluntarily—he can bind them, while they feel not their chains, but even boast of their liberty. He has many designs to accomplish, and he suits his instruments to their work—some of his purposes are dreadful; and he can make executioners of those who are unqualified to wait in his royal presence. Some of them are preparatory—and he may use, in removing the rubbish, those who could not be employed in the erection of the fair edifice.

And thus Nebuchadrezzar is called the servant of God, as well as the apostle Paul—but observe the difference between them; and, as God will derive glory from all his creatures, inquire which of these characters you are resembling.—The former serves God, only from the influence of an overruling Providence—the latter, from the operation of divine grace—"Behold, he prayeth:" his language is, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?"—He catches the Spirit of his Master; enters cheerfully into all his views; doth his will "from the heart." And so it is with all his sincere followers. Whatever they once were, they are made willing in the day of his power; their minds are enlightened, their dispositions are renewed; they glorify him, from conviction and principle; it is their aim; the delight of their souls, and the business of their lives. "O Lord, other lords beside thee have had dominion over us; henceforth by thee only will we make mention of thy name.—Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth. I hold myself at thy disposal; prescribe the laws which are to govern me; choose my inheritance for me."—

—Such is their language; and never will they have cause to repent of their engagements. They have chosen that good part which shall not be taken from them: in life and in death, in time and in eternity, they will have reason to say, "Thou hast dealt well with thy servant, O Lord." For,

III. None can be losers by any thing they do for God. In one way or another, He will surely recompense them. Even services done for Him by worldly men obtain a temporal reward. The Egyptian females, though strangers to the commonwealth of Israel, "feared God, and did not as the king commanded them; but saved the men-children alive—therefore God dealt well with them, and he made them houses." Jehu was a vain, ostentatious, wicked prince, "and departed not from the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin"—but "the Lord said unto Jehu, Because thou hast done well in executing that which is right in mine eyes, and hast done unto the house of Ahab according to all that was in mine heart, thy children of the fourth generation shall sit upon the throne of Israel."—So here, "I have given Nebuchadrezzar the land of Egypt for his labour wherewith he served against it; because they wrought for me, saith the Lord God." This is indeed a poor recompense. It may appear splendid and important in the eye of the vain and the sensual, but the righteous are far from envying it. They dread to be excluded from future hope, by the sentence, "they have their reward." They are more afraid of the destiny than of the malice of the wicked, and therefore pray, "Deliver my soul from the wicked, which is thy sword; from men of the world, who have their por-

tion in this life, and whose belly thou fillest with thy hid treasure: they are full of children, and leave the rest of their substance to their babes.—As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied when I awake with thy likeness." Egypt was all the remuneration of Nebuchadrezzar—and what could it do for him? What is it to him now!

Ye servants of the most high God, who know him and love him; He has provided some better thing for you. You may argue from the less to the greater—Does he reward heathens, and will he abandon Christians? Does he observe slaves, and disregard sons who serve him? Does he honour instruments, and pass by those who strive to please and glorify him! "Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to GIVE YOU THE KINGDOM." He who noticed the hardships endured by the poor soldiers before Tyre, when every head was bald, and every shoulder peeled, will not suffer you to labour in vain: he sees your difficulties; considers the burdens under which you bend; he hears your groans, and your sighs—when without are fightings, and within are fears. They who speak often one to another, and they who think only upon his Name, are—recorded in the book of his remembrance. "God is not unrighteous, to forget your work of faith and labour of love." He applauded the widow's mite. He said of Mary, "She hath done what she could." "He that receiveth a prophet in the name of a prophet, shall receive a prophet's reward; and he that receiveth a righteous man in the name of a righteous man, shall receive a righteous man's reward. And whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones a cup of cold water only, in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward."

Christians, let all this animate you to vigorous and increasing exertion. It is condescension and kindness in God to employ you. He needs you not: he does it to improve you, to honour you, to enable you to procure what you can never deserve; to give your happiness the nature of a reward. Do you not long to be employed by him? Is it nothing to be workers together with God? Is it a vain thing to serve the Lord? "Godliness is profitable unto all things; having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come." "There is no man that hath left house, or parents, or brethren, or wife, or children, for the kingdom of God's sake, who shall not receive manifold more in this present time, and in the world to come life everlasting." "Be ye strong therefore; and let not your hands be weak; for your work shall be rewarded."

Do you ask—how can we work for Him? —In pulling down the strong-holds of sin; in diffusing truth; in supporting the Gospel; in maintaining the worship of God; in feeding the hungry; in teaching the ignorant; in reclaiming the vicious—for "it is not the will of your Father who is in heaven that one of these little ones should perish."

Do you ask—And what will be our reward? —You will find it in the very nature of your work; you will find it in the glow of pleasure which attends virtuous exertion; you will find it in the approving testimony of your own conscience; you will find it in the esteem of the wise and good; you will find it in the blessing of them that were ready to perish; you will find it in the applause of your Lord and Saviour—"Well done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."

—What! some are ready to exclaim, What are you preaching up the doctrine of merit! —God forbid. Merit! when both our disposition and our ability to serve Him come from his grace. Merit! when there is no proportion between the reward and the work. Merit! when, after we have done all, we are unprofitable servants, and have done no more than was our duty to do. Merit! when in many things we all offend, and deserve condemnation for our defects rather than recompense for our doings. Merit! when all who ever served God aright have exclaimed, "Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto thy name give we glory, for thy mercy and for thy truth's sake. By the grace of God, I am what I am—I laboured—yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me"—But let us not, under a senseless clamour, be afraid to do justice to the language of Scripture—to bring forward motives which we find stated by Infinite Wisdom—to display the munificence of God—the folly of those who refuse his yoke—the wisdom of those who serve him —"Wherefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord."

Finally, Let us think of the Saviour. Did God remunerate a despicable tyrant for his labour and hardships—though they were not personal, and for fulfilling His purpose—though it was not intentional? "Behold his Servant whom he upholds, his Elect in whom his soul delighteth." This was expressly his motive: "Lo! I come to do thy will, O God: thy law is within my heart." He trod "the wine-press alone, and of the people there was none with him." Behold him poor, not having where to lay his head; despised and rejected of men; exceeding sorrowful. What a life of suffering! what a death of anguish!—What does God think of all this? "He was obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.—WHEREFORE God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and

things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." "He shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hands. He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied. THEREFORE will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; BECAUSE he hath poured out his soul unto death: and he was numbered with the transgressors; and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors. Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession. His Name shall endure for ever; his Name shall be continued as long as the sun: and men shall be blessed in him; all nations shall call him blessed. Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, who only doeth wonderful things. And blessed be his glorious Name for ever; and let the whole earth be filled with his glory. Amen, and Amen."

SERMON XXII.

THE DISAPPOINTMENTS OF LIFE.

Then I said, I shall die in my nest.—Job xxix. 18.

IF we examine the world in which we live, we shall everywhere discover variety, changeableness, and succession. Here plains rise into mountains, and there hills sink into valleys. We see well-watered meadows, and dry and barren sands. We rejoice in the light; but we are soon enveloped in darkness. We hail the loveliness of spring, and welcome the approach of summer; but the agreeable months soon roll away, and the north pours down the desolations of winter. Equally checquered and variable is human life. Our bodies, our relations, our conditions and circumstances, are perpetually changing. But this diversity constitutes the beauty and the glory of Providence. It displays the Divine perfections, by rendering their interposition necessary and obvious. It furnishes means, by which the dispositions of men are tried, and their characters formed. It lays hold of their hope and fear, joy and sorrow; and exercises every principle of their nature, in their education for eternity.

Hence Divine Providence is always deserving of our attention. Providence—is God in motion. Providence—is God teaching by facts. Providence—is God fulfilling, explaining, enforcing his own word. Providence—is God rendering natural events subservient to spiritual purposes—rousing our attention when we are careless—reminding us of our obligations when we are ungrateful—recalling our confidence when we depart from him by dependence upon creatures. "Whoso is wise, and will observe these things, even they shall understand the loving-kindness of the Lord."

The words which I have read give us an opportunity to pursue and improve these reflections.—When Job uttered them, "he had seven sons and three daughters. His substance also was seven thousand sheep, and three thousand camels, and five hundred yoke of oxen, and five hundred she-asses, and a very great household; so that this man was the greatest of all the men of the east." Hear his own language: "I washed my steps with butter, and the rock poured me out rivers of oil. When I went out to the gate through the city, when I prepared my seat in the street, the young men saw me, and hid themselves; and the aged arose and stood up: the princes refrained talking, and laid their hand on their mouth; the nobles held their peace, and their tongue cleaved to the roof of their mouth"—He had something better than all this—"When the ear heard me, then it blessed me; and when the eye saw me, it gave witness to me: because I delivered the poor that cried, and the fatherless, and him that had none to help him. The blessing of him that was ready to perish came upon me: and I caused the widow's heart to sing for joy. I put on righteousness, and it clothed me: my judgment was a robe and a diadem. I was eyes to the blind, and feet was I to the lame. I was a father to the poor: and the cause which I knew not I searched out. And I brake the jaws of the wicked, and plucked the spoil out of his teeth.—Then I said, I shall die in my nest.—THEN—when I had such wealth, power, authority, honour—THEN—when all was green and flowery, when my sky was clear and no cloud appeared—THEN—concluding on the permanency of my condition, imagining I was in no danger of vicissitude, and supposing I should live happy and end my days in peace—THEN I said, I shall die in my nest."—

What does this passage of Scripture imply and express? What views and feelings of mind does it characterize?

I. In these words we see something GOOD—Even in his greatest prosperity, Job thought of DYING: whatever changes he hoped to escape in life, he expected an hour of dissolution, and knew, if his possessions were continued, he should be called to leave them.

Death is always an irksome consideration to the man of the world, who has his portion in this life, and possesses no hope of a better—He therefore strives to banish it from his thoughts. He puts far off the evil day, and lives as if he flattered himself with an immortality upon earth. But the believer keeps up a familiar acquaintance with it. He does not think of death only when trouble embitters life, and forces him to say, "I loathe it;

I would not live always." He reflects upon it when the world smiles, as well as when it frowns. Whatever be his present circumstances, he feels and confesses himself to be a stranger and a pilgrim on the earth. His hope is always infinitely superior to his enjoyments: beyond the grave, he has a house, not made with hands; a city, which hath foundations; a better, a heavenly country; more numerous, more endeared connections —There lies his inheritance—there dwells his Father—there is his eternal home. Hence we have seen even persons possessed of riches, honour, friends, health, and surrounded with every thing desirable, "willing to depart, to be with Christ, which is far better."

It must, however, be acknowledged, that it is far more difficult to maintain this state of mind in pleasing and prosperous circumstances, than in trying and distressing scenes. It was a wise reflection of Charles the Fifth to the Duke of Venice, when he shewed him the Treasury of St. Mark, and the glory of his princely palace—Instead of admiring them, he said—"These are the things that make men so loath to die." When every thing is agreeable in our condition, we are in danger of feeling a disposition to settle, and of saying, "It is good for us to be here"—Not, "Arise, let us go hence." We think of adorning, not leaving; of pulling down our barns and building greater, not of contracting all into the narrow limits of the grave. But it would be wise to take often realizing views of death. It would come over us like a cloud, to cool our brainless ardours—It would check the pride of life, which so often carries us away—It would sanctify our possessions, and keep our prosperity from destroying us—It would lead us to use soberly and profitably those talents of which so shortly we must give up our account—It would excite us to secure those things in their uses and effects which we cannot retain in their substance—and urge us to be "rich in good works; ready to distribute, willing to communicate; laying up in store for ourselves a good foundation against the time to come;" and to make ourselves "friends of the mammon of unrighteousness, that when we fail they may receive us into everlasting habitations."

Accustom yourselves, therefore, to reflections so useful, and learn to "die daily." Say, while walking over your fields, The hour is coming when I shall behold you no more—When you go over your mansion, "If I wait, the grave is my house"—As you estimate your property, "I cannot tell who shall gather it." This apparel, which I now lay aside and resume, I shall soon lay aside for ever—and this bed, in which I now enjoy the sleep of nature, will by-and-by feel me chilling it with the damps of death. "Lord, make me to know mine end, and the measure of my days, what it is, that I may know how frail I am!" And surely it requires contrivance and difficulty to keep off reflections so reasonable and salutary. Every thing is forcing the consideration upon you—every thing is saying, "The time is short: it remaineth that they that have wives be as though they had none; and they that weep, as though they wept not; and they that rejoice, as though they rejoiced not; and they that buy, as though they possessed not; and they that use this world, as not abusing it; for the fashion of this world passeth away." I am the more diligent, says the apostle Peter, "knowing that I must shortly put off this my tabernacle; even as our Lord Jesus Christ hath shewed me." And has he not shewed you the same—if not by immediate revelation, yet by the language of Scripture, by the brevity of life, by the loss of connections, by personal decays?—"Stand with your loins girded, and your lamps burning,"—"Man, that is born of a woman, is of few days, and full of trouble. He cometh forth like a flower, and is cut down: he fleeth also as a shadow, and continueth not." "The fathers, where are they? and the prophets, do they live for ever?" We enter the city—and see man going to his long home, and the mourners going about the streets. We enter the sanctuary—and miss those with whom we once took sweet counsel, and went to the house of God in company—their places know them no more for ever. We enter our own dwellings; and painful recollection is awakened by the seats they once filled, by the books they once read, and have left folded down with their own hands: we walk from room to room, and sigh, "Lover and friend hast thou put far from me, and mine acquaintance into darkness." We examine ourselves, and find that our strength is not the strength of stones, nor are our bones brass; we are crushed before the moth; at our best estate, we are altogether vanity—And is it for such beings to live as if they were never to die! O Lord, "so teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom."

II. In these words we see something DESIRABLE. Who does not wish to have his possessions and enjoyments continued! to escape painful revolutions in his circumstances? "to die in his nest?" We talk of the benefit of affliction—but affliction, simply considered, is not eligible. We decry the passions—but we are required to regulate the passions, rather than expel them. We appeal to Scripture—but the Scripture knows nothing of a religion founded upon the ruins of humanity, and unsuitable to the life that now is. He who made us knows our frame, and does not expect us to be indifferent to pain or ease, to sickness or health, to indigence or competency, to exile or a place where to lay our heads. These temporal things are good in themselves; they are needful: we have bodies as well as souls; we have connections to

provide for, as well as our own persons. They are sometimes promised in Scripture. We find pious men praying for them; and their prayers are recorded with honour. Our error in desiring them consists in two things.

First, in desiring them UNCONDITIONALLY. In praying for temporal blessings, we are always to keep a reserve upon our wishes, including submission to the will of God, and a reference to our real welfare. For we often know not what to pray for as we ought, and may be more injured by the gratification than by the refusal of our desires. We know ourselves very imperfectly, and hence we cannot determine what influence untried circumstances would have upon our minds. Placed in the same situations with others, we may act the very part we now condemn. The changes which may take place in our character may surprise others and shock ourselves. "Who knoweth what is good for man in this life, all the days of his vain life which he spendeth as a shadow?" Why God, and God only—Refer, therefore, the decision to Him: it is your interest as well as your duty to leave him to choose all for you—

> "His choice is safer than your own.
> "Of ages past inquire—
> "—What the most formidable fate?
> "To have your own desire"

Hence, the prayer which Socrates taught his pupil Alcibiades is not unworthy the use of a Christian—"That he should beseech the Supreme Being to give him what was good for him, though he should not ask it; and to withhold from him whatever was injurious, if by his folly he should be led to pray for it."

Secondly, When we desire them SUPREMELY. For whatever be their utility, they are not to be compared with spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ. Things are to be valued and pursued according to their importance. Many things are serviceable; "but one thing is needful." Civil freedom is valuable—but the glorious liberty of the sons of God is much more precious. It is well for the body to be in health—but it is much better for the soul to prosper. Silver and gold are useful—but there are durable riches with righteousness. It is pleasing to die in our nest—but it is much more desirable to die even in a prison or upon a dunghill, if we can say, with Simeon, "Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word; for mine eyes have seen thy salvation."

III. In these words we find something very COMMON—It is affluence and ease cherishing confidence and presumption—It is a supposition that we shall have no changes because we feel none. The consequence is natural, and it is easily explained. Present things most powerfully impress the mind. Take a man in trouble, and with what difficulty will you persuade him to expect better days! The gloom of his situation darkens his very soul, and the burden of his afflictions presses and keeps down every cheerful sentiment. Take a man in agreeable circumstances, and his feelings will give a colour to future scenes. every thing will appear favourable, because every thing is easy. The mind, softened down by indulgence, shrinks even from the contemplation of difficulties. And when experience has not furnished him with any instances of the precariousness of worldly things, he leans on these supports too firmly, and does not suspect that they will give way. Hence Agur prefers mediocrity to wealth—"Lest I be full, and deny thee, and say, Who is the Lord? Hence we are to charge the rich, "not to trust in uncertain riches:" the admonition implies the tendency there is in the affluent to indulge such a dependence. Having friends and powerful alliances, and encouraged by the success of their former plans and exertions, the conclusion follows—"To-morrow shall be as this day, and much more abundant." "Their inward thought is, that their houses shall continue for ever, and their dwelling places to all generations: they call their land after their own name." "He saith, in his heart, I shall never be moved; for I never shall be in adversity." Hear the man whose ground brought forth plentifully: "Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry."—When did not prosperity promote carnal security and presumptuous confidence? Of Moab God complains, "Thou hast trusted in thy works and in thy treasures."—"Jeshurun waxed fat, and kicked—Then he forsook God which made him, and lightly esteemed the Rock of his salvation."

For this is not the case with the people of the world only—even the godly are in danger of the same evil. David is an example. Though he had passed through very trying scenes, the ease which succeeded seems to have abolished the memory of them, and by continued indulgence his hopes became earthly and rash—"In my prosperity, I said, I shall never be moved." Good Hezekiah furnishes another instance. He had been recovered from sickness, delivered from invasion, and enriched by presents—"But Hezekiah rendered not again according to the benefit done unto him; for his heart was lifted up"—His greatness elated him. He gloried in his abundance, and vainly exposed the treasures of his palace: to the ambassadors of Babylon he showed his nest—and they told Nebuchadrezzar their master, who returned and took it—it is the very image under which this plunderer speaks of his pillage—"By the strength of my hand I have done it, and by my wisdom; for I am prudent: and I have removed the bounds of the people, and have robbed their treasures; and my hand hath found as a nest the riches of the people: and as one gathereth eggs that are left, have I

gathered all the earth; and there was none that moved the wing, or opened the mouth, or peeped." And this brings us,

IV. To observe in these words something very FALSE and VAIN—"Then I said, I shall die in my nest!" Ah, Job!—"Boast not thyself of to-morrow, for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth." "While you speak, the storm is rising which will shake down your nest, and lodge its contents upon the dunghill." In a few hours, you will be deprived of all—one messenger shall announce the loss of your cattle—another, the destruction of your servants—a third, the death of your children. You will feel your health converted into loathsomeness and disease—and you will sit amongst the ashes, and take a potsherd to scrape yourself withal. And while your head is bare to the pelting of the pitiless storm—your friends will come around you, and read you lectures upon hypocrisy, and insinuate that the sins in which you have privately indulged have at last found you out—Miserable comforters!———And you, alas! how changed your voice!—You will say, in the bitterness of your soul, "I was not in safety, neither had I rest, neither was I quiet—yet trouble came."

—So ignorant are we of futurity—so erroneous are we in our calculations—so liable are we to mortifying vicissitudes! "The inhabitants of Maroth waited carefully for good, but evil came down from the Lord unto the gate of Jerusalem." "Behold," says Hezekiah, "for peace I had great bitterness." "We looked for peace," says the Church, "but no good came; and for a time of health, and behold trouble!" Indeed whatever engages our affection may become a source of sorrow: whatever excites our hope may prove the means of disappointment. Such is the hard condition upon which we take all our earthly comforts.—

Are we secure from disappointment with regard to LIFE? This is the tenure by which we hold all our possessions; and nothing can be more uncertain. "For man also knoweth not his time: as the fishes that are taken in an evil net, and the birds that are caught in the snare; so are the sons of men snared in an evil time, when it falleth suddenly upon them." "Go to now, ye that say, To-day or to-morrow we will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell, and get gain: whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away."

—Are we secure from disappointment in our HEALTH? This blessing is necessary to our relishing every other enjoyment: but how precarious is the continuance of it! Upon how many delicate and combined causes does it depend! How easily may some of them be deranged! Are we ever safe from those accidents which may strike, or those diseases which may invade us? How many have been compelled by pain and indisposition to drop an enterprise which they had undertaken, a journey which they had begun!

—Are we secure from disappointment with regard to CHILDREN? The forebodings of the parental mind are fond and flattering: but, oh! how unanswerable to eager expectation have events often proved! "This same shall comfort us" has been said of many a child, who has been dismembered or sickly in body, beclouded in understanding, vicious and disorderly in life, embarrassed and miserable in circumstances.—The father had looked forward and promised himself an entertaining companion; and behold the care and the expense of fourteen years carried down to the grave! See Rachel—she has been laying aside the little garments her busy hands had wrought, and putting out of sight the toys which lately charmed the desire of her eyes—and, "weeping for her children, refuses to be comforted, because they are not."

—Are we secure from disappointment with regard to FRIENDSHIP? How many of our connections have dropped us already, and by their painful defections have called upon us to cease from man! How small is the number of true sterling friends, who will abide the day of trial! Some of those who are now fawning, would not, if a change of circumstances occurred, even know us. They leave the garden in winter—there is nothing to gather. The flower which they placed in their bosom—as soon as it has exhaled its perfume, they throw withered into the dirt. Of what use is the scaffolding when the building is finished—it is laid by out of sight. "My brethren," says the renowned sufferer, "have dealt deceitfully as a brook, and as the stream of brooks they pass away: what time they wax warm, they vanish; when it is hot, they are consumed out of their place."

—Are we secure from disappointment with regard to PROPERTY? Where can you safely lay up treasure upon earth? Water inundates, flames devour, moth and rust corrupt, thieves break through and steal. Riches make to themselves wings and flee away. Appearances may be favourable, plans may be well laid, every assistance necessary to success may be procured—but "the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong; neither yet bread to the wise, nor yet riches to men of understanding, nor yet favour to men of skill; but time and chance happeneth to them all." "Money is a defence," and hence it is so anxiously desired, so universally pursued—but how many have fallen from the highest affluence into the depths of indigence, and have had their necessities embittered by the recollection of the plenty which once made their cup to run over! "Wo to him that coveteth an evil covetousness to his house,

that he may set his nest on high, that he may be delivered from the power of evil!" "Though thou exalt thyself as the eagle, and though thou set thy nest amongst the stars, thence will I bring thee down, saith the Lord."

Let us conclude by observing—that it would be an abuse of this part of our subject, were you to suppose that we recommend you to cherish everlasting apprehension and gloom. Much of our happiness lies in freedom from suspicion and anxiety. To live with a troubled and desponding mind is as bad as any thing we can actually suffer. Imaginary grief is frequently worse than real. It is displeasing to God when we sour the mercies he gives us to enjoy, by distrust. We may avoid solicitude, and not be guilty of the worldly confidence which we have condemned. But it does require you,

First, To be moderate in your attachments, and sober in your expectations. The way to escape disappointment, is to keep your hopes humble, and to cultivate such a disposition as David expressed when he said, "Lord, my heart is not haughty, nor mine eyes lofty: neither do I exercise myself in great matters, or in things too high for me. Surely I have behaved and quieted myself as a child that is weaned of his mother: my soul is even as a weaned child." The admonition of the wise man is not designed to embitter the comforts of life, but to remind us of its unavoidable calamities, and to keep us from being surprised and disconcerted when they arrive—"If a man live many years and rejoice in them all; yet let him remember the days of darkness, for they shall be many: all that cometh is vanity." If, in spite of reason, and the uniform deposition of travellers, you will go forth, assured that in your journey the weather will be always fair, and the road always smooth—you must be left to the tuition of events. If you will enter the world, expecting to find it a paradise, thorns and briers, and scorpions and drought, will soon convince you that you are in a wilderness. This caution, my young friends, peculiarly belongs to you. Your age is sanguine. You are most liable to be deceived by appearances, because you have not found how seldom they accord with reality. Do not form too flattering a picture of human life. Believe the testimony of Scripture. Go sometimes to the house of mourning, rather than to the house of mirth. Listen to those who have gone before you. You only see a little narrow arm of the sea sheltered by the neighbouring hills; but some have sailed beyond the reach of your eye, and have seen storms and wrecks.

Secondly, It calls upon you to seek a better ground of confidence, and to make the Lord your trust. Creatures are broken reeds, but he is the Rock of Ages. They are broken cisterns, but he is the fountain of living waters. "Put not your trust in princes, nor in the son of man, in whom there is no help. His breath goeth forth, he returneth to his earth; in that very day his thoughts perish." "Happy is he that hath the God of Jacob for his help, whose hope is in the Lord his God." Yes; there is something firm and certain. God will not deceive us, cannot disappoint us. His power is almighty, his mercy endureth for ever, his word is faithfulness and truth. "Therefore will I look unto the Lord, I will wait for the God of my salvation." Having committed all my concerns into his hands, and knowing that He careth for me, I am careful for nothing. Persuaded that He who has the direction of every event will make all things to work together for my good, I feel a peace which passeth all understanding, and rejoice in the language of the Church, "God is our refuge and strength; a very present help in trouble: therefore will we not fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea; though the waters thereof roar and be troubled, and the mountains shake with the swelling thereof." "There is a river, the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God, the holy place of the tabernacles of the Most High."

Thirdly, It calls upon you to seek after a preparation for all the changing scenes of life. It is better to depend upon constitution than atmosphere, and to be equal to any climate rather than confined to one. It is better to depend upon appetite than dainties—delicacies are not always to be procured; and what becomes of you when they are wanting, if you cannot live upon common food? Divine grace will preserve the balance of the soul in varying conditions: it will secure you in prosperity, and sustain you in the day of adversity. This sanctified Daniel when a minister of state, and soothed him when in the den of lions. This enabled Paul to say, "I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: every where, and in all things, I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me."

Finally, It calls upon you to look beyond this vain and mutable world to a state of solid and unchangeable happiness. Whatever advantages religion affords, by enabling us to endure and to improve the difficulties and troubles of life, it does not hinder us from feeling ourselves in circumstances of trial and imperfection. "We are troubled on every side," if "not distressed; we are perplexed," if "not in despair; persecuted," if "not forsaken; cast down," if "not destroyed."—To die is gain. Death ends our toil and our strife, and brings us the rest that "remains for the people of God." Then shadows will be exchanged for substance. Then we shall embrace our enjoyments without fear of losing them. Then farewell care and disappoint-

ment. Our "sun shall no more go down, nor" our "moon withdraw her shining, for God" is our "everlasting light, and the days of" our "mourning" are "ended.

SERMON XXIII.

NEUTRALITY IN RELIGION EXPOSED.

No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.—Matt. vi. 24.

THERE is something in the Scripture suited to every taste except a sinful one. The Bible indeed is so pure—so holy in its Author, its principles, and its design, that it is the easiest thing in the world to account for infidelity and error—they are the natural opposition of men of corrupt minds. But with regard to others, every peculiar turn of mind may be indulged, and the same end may be secured by various means. Some are fond of history—and here we have narrations, placing before us striking characters and occurrences. Some love a series of proof and a process of argumentation—and here we have frequent specimens of close reasoning. Some take pleasure in imagery and comparisons—and here we have a plenitude of parables and metaphors. And some are charmed with proverbs and aphorisims—and here we find detached sentences, which by their brevity are easily remembered, and by their significancy furnish materials for the mind to unfold and apply. And of all these, perhaps no one is more important and interesting than the passage which I have read. "No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon."

One word only requires explanation.—What is mammon? It is commonly supposed to mean only riches; but, as the Bishop of London has observed in his Lecture upon this Chapter, the original seems more extensive, and leads us to consider it as comprehending every thing capable of engaging the affections, and of gaining the confidence of men of worldly minds. It is a Syriac word, importing treasure, gain—Whatever therefore is gain to you, is mammon—whether it be wealth, or power, or fame, or sensual pleasure. Whatever you idolize, whatever you place in the room of God, whatever leads you to oppose his nature and his will concerning your duty and your happiness, according to the design of our Saviour, falls under this denomination. Subtility of interpretation is always, and minuteness of decision is generally to be avoided in expounding the Scripture: words are used in a popular sense; and they would become less useful, if they were rendered less general. The force of an impression which would otherwise have been made, has often been diminished by means of those exceptions, qualifications, restrictions, distinctions, which have so much abounded in commentaries and sermons, and through which the spirit of the Sacred Writings is suffered to evaporate. This being premised, we proceed to call your serious attention to three things.

I. NO MAN CAN SERVE TWO MASTERS; YOU CANNOT SERVE GOD AND MAMMON—This is clearly expressed.

II. ONE OF THESE YOU WILL UNAVOIDABLY SERVE—This is fully implied.

III. YOU OUGHT TO SERVE GOD—This is fairly inferred. Consider what I say; and the Lord give you understanding in all things. Amen.

I. "Write the vision and make it plain upon tables, that he may run that readeth it." This order the inspired penmen have obeyed. They have made things clear, in proportion as they are momentous; and such is the perspicuity with which many of the principles of religion are laid down in the Scripture, that we should deem it impossible for them ever to be misunderstood—did we not know how easy it is to perplex a rule by which we dislike to walk, and remember what a power there is in the passions to pervert the dictates of the understanding, and to baffle the admonitions of conscience. For instance: What can be more fully, more unambiguously expressed than the determination before us? "No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon." Nevertheless there are many who contrive to elude the force of this maxim, or who seem resolved to make a succession of awful experiments to try the certainty of it. The number of this mixed temporizing race of Christians is constantly increasing; and while they are bringing destruction upon their own souls, they are injuring the cause of the Gospel, and counteracting the labours of faithful ministers ten-fold more than those who make no pretensions to religion.—"They have a name to live, while they are dead." They wear "the form of godliness," while they deny "the power thereof." They are equally remote from the excesses of the profane and the fervours of the pious. They refuse to the passions what would disturb the conscience, and to the conscience what would disturb the passions. Endeavouring to reconcile an earthly and a heavenly life together, they waver between truth and error, conviction and appetite, duty and inclination; and divide their affections and services between God and the world. Some moments they give to devotion: they pray, they unite with

the holy assemblies, they sometimes approach the table of the Lord—When this is done, they have another master to serve: they leave the house of God, and occupy places of dissipation; they relish the follies, and comply with the manners of a sinful age; and as the eye follows their career, you see them dropping one distinction after another, they are undistinguishingly blended with the crowd.

Nor are these persons wanting in excuses to palliate, if not to justify their practice. They allege that it renders religion less objectionable; that it keeps up an intercourse which renders them useful; that—But I disdain to enumerate such pleas of worldly-mindedness—they will not abide the day of trial—they are all as tow before the flame—the declaration of our Lord and Saviour consumes them. For observe, my brethren, upon what he lays the stress of his reasoning—it is the IMPOSSIBILITY of the case. He does not say, You shall not, You must not, You ought not—but you CANNOT. "No man CAN serve two masters—Ye CANNOT serve God and mammon."

There are, however, four cases in which you may serve two masters; but these exceptions will only render the general rule the more remarkable, and will also help us to understand it. For, first, you may serve two masters successively. There are some who have lived in various families; and they have served the gentle and the froward, the evil and the good. Christians once served divers lusts and pleasures, and now they serve God; but they did not serve both at the same time—this was impracticable. "Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness. For when ye were the servants of sin, ye were free from righteousness." Secondly, you may serve two masters, by serving one of them in reality, and the other in pretence. But while you truly love the world, will God be satisfied with appearances and professions? Is he deceived? Can any disguise conceal you from his eye? Will he not abhor you the more for your hypocrisy? And will not such a course of dissimulation be a life of meanness, embarrassment, and misery, in which you will offer violence to nature, and perpetually dread the detection of your real character? Thirdly, your may serve two masters unequally—While devoted to the one, you may occasionally attend the other: but you cannot be engaged to him also; you cannot serve him constantly; you cannot make his service your business, cannot be entirely at his disposal. But nothing less than this does God require of all those who serve HIM. Fourthly, you may serve two masters, when they are on the same side, and differ only in degree. Thus you obey parents and magistrates, and God too; for, in obeying them, you obey him—he has commanded it. But it is otherwise, when two parties hostile to each other require you to espouse their jarring interests, and each says, "My son, give me thy heart." Now this is the case with the masters here mentioned. For mammon is not subordinate to God, nor does it enjoin the same things. Their orders are diametrically opposite. The one commands you to walk by faith; the other, to walk by sight—the one, to be proud; the other, to be humble—the one, to cleave to the dust; the other, to have your conversation in heaven—the one to be all anxiety; the other, to be careful for nothing—the one, to be content with such things as you have; the other, to enlarge your desire as hell—the one, to withhold; the other, to give, to be ready to distribute, willing to communicate. Now what is to be done in a case like this? If the mind be full, it can hold no more. Human faculties are not infinite. The operations of the soul are limited. We cannot remain in a state of equilibrium between contrary attractions, without preferring one to the other—Hence we always take a part; and the part chosen becomes the master of the heart, and obliges us to separate from the rest as much as they oppose each other or interfere. Here, then, my dear hearers, you are furnished with a criterion by which to judge of your state and your character. The conclusion is obvious and undeniable—If you love and serve the world, you cannot love and serve God. And the exclusion is serious and dreadful—for you are here reminded that worldly attachments, dependences, and pursuits, are not only injurious to real religion, but entirely incompatible with it—that they are not some of those inferior mistakes and infirmities which we deplore in good men; but a deadly evil which overspreads all the powers of the soul, infects all the principles of action, gives the whole life a wrong bias, the whole man a direction towards hell. "Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you." "Love not the world, neither the things of the world; for if any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him." "Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? Whosoever, therefore, will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God." "No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon."

II. You cannot serve both; but one of these you will unavoidably serve. The second proposition is as true as the first—It is as impossible for a man to be without some master, as to serve more masters than one. Man is an active being, and must be employed; he will always be engaged in the pursuit of something, either by exertion or desire. Man

is a dependent creature. Like the vine, he must lean for support; and if the elm be not near, he will embrace the bramble. He thirsts; and if he has forsaken the Fountain of living waters, he will repair to broken cisterns, or kneel down to the filthy puddle. A sense of his wants and weaknesses produces an uneasiness, which urges him to seek after assistance and relief. Hence, man cannot be without attachment. Not finding in himself the good he desires, he passes forth, and adheres to something external: but this object necessarily governs him; for it is the very nature of love to subject us to that which we love: and it fastens us by various ties; for desire and aversion, hope and fear, joy and sorrow, zeal and revenge, are only modes of affection.

There is nothing of which men are so tenacious as independence and liberty; and even when they are destitute of the substance, they glory in the shadow. The Jews are an example. In reply to our Lord, they said, "We are Abraham's seed, and were never in bondage to any man"—What! Have you forgotten the land of Egypt? Did you never serve the Philistines, the Moabites, the Ammonites? Were you not seventy years in Babylon?—Whose soldiers are these stationed among you?—Bring me a piece of money—"whose image and superscription is it?" Are you not even now wearing the yoke of Cæsar?—Yes; and you are wearing another yoke far more disgraceful than even this, and which enslaves the mind—for "he that committeth sin is the servant of sin."

And does not this exemplify the folly and delusion of sinners? They imagine themselves to be their own masters, especially when they have shaken off what they deem the prejudices of education and the scruples of superstition. Then they are free indeed; they live without control; and, with affected pity, consider Christians as subject to the most humiliating restraints. But what if these advocates for independence should be found slaves themselves, and all their boastings of freedom be only great swelling words of vanity?—"While they promise them liberty, they themselves are the servants of corruption; for of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought into bondage." "Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?" What! is there no other master than God? Because you refuse allegiance to your lawful sovereign, does it follow that you are your own? May there not be usurpers? Instead of being under the government of one, may you not be under the tyranny of many, "each seeking his gain from his quarter?" Instead of paying a regular and reasonable tribute, may you not become the victims of illegal exaction, and the tools of arbitrary power?—Hear what Shemaiah said to Rehoboam and the princes of Judah—"Ye have forsaken the Lord; therefore have I left you in the hand of Shishak king of Egypt: and they shall be his servants; that they may know my service, and the service of the kingdoms of the countries." To the same purpose is the language of God by Moses to the Israelites: "Because thou servedst not the Lord thy God with joyfulness, and with gladness of heart, for the abundance of all things; therefore shalt thou serve thine enemies, which the Lord shall send against thee, in hunger, and in thirst, and in nakedness, and in want of all things; and he shall put a yoke of iron upon thy neck until he have destroyed thee." All this is fulfilled in the unhappy experience of every transgressor. For his rebellion he is doomed, by a law of inevitable necessity, to serve divers tyrants. Yes: if you are not the subjects of humility, you will be the vassals of pride; and what a life will ambition lead you! If you are not the servants of meekness, you will be the slaves of passion; and is the man to be envied, who is governed by the impulses of such a fury! See a man who has sold himself to covetousness; what African slave ever drudged for such a task-master as he—compelling him to rise early, to sit up late, to eat the bread of sorrows, to assume every form of falsehood, to stoop to every instance of meanness, forbidding him the luxury of refreshing the bowels of the poor and of blessing the orphan and the widow, often denying him the accommodations and sometimes the necessaries of life, and—thus forcing him to live in beggary to to die in wealth! Disclaiming the service of God, you serve the Devil, who employs you in drudgery, and rewards you with damnation—"for the wages of sin is death." Discarding the Saviour's yoke, which is easy, and his burden, which is light; you wear the galling and heavy chains of vice—and what slavery equals a wicked life? See the sinner impelled along violently, like the swine possessed with demons—He follows a course which he condemns himself for pursuing—he does things, of which, at the very time, he knows he shall repent as soon as he has done them—actions, which he abhors in others, he is forced to perform himself—when he goes forth, he cannot tell how he shall return; for this does not depend upon him, but upon circumstances over which he has no power—he may see or hear something, by which impressions may be produced which he cannot resist—he may accidentally meet with one of his tyrants, who may say to him, "Do this," and he must do it—his passions and his lusts make him toil at their pleasure—and he goes on executing their orders, though his understanding blushes, reason remonstrates, con-

science upbraids and threatens—he sees and he approves better things, and follows worse —and this is the man who pretends to be free!

You say, Religion demands of us a succession of services, from which you are exempted. But, O ye votaries of the world, let us examine your claims, and see wherein your pre-eminence appears.—Have YOU then no services to render? Think of YOUR privations and sacrifices and submissions—think of the numerous and arbitrary laws YOU have to obey—the laws of opinion, the laws of custom, the laws of extravagance, the laws of folly. Yes; I sometimes think, if religion were to require of me such duties as the world imposes upon its enslaved followers—if it required me to turn day into night, and deprived me of seasonable repose—if it required me to embrace indecent and injurious fashions and to expose at once my modesty and my health—if it required me to adopt expensive modes of life which devoured my substance, and involved me in pecuniary disgrace —if it required me to spend my evenings from home, and to resign domestic enjoyments to rove from one insipid amusement to another—if it required me to give up all that is easy and simple and natural, for ceremonies, visits, and crowds, where all is artificial, studied, and forced—if it required me to convert my dwelling into the confusion and disorder of a rout; to stoop to the absurdity of a masquerade; to hazard my own life and the life of my fellow creature, because I had received an offence, perhaps unintentionally given, and allowed me not the choice of refusal—Then I should conceive a disgust; then I should long to emancipate myself from such capricious despotism: I should sigh for liberty —for what liberty could I enjoy while compelled to submit to what is unreasonable and foolish, to what is dishonourable and shameful, to what is injurious and ruinous? But remember, ye followers of the vain world, these are the commands YOU obey—these are the services YOU render.

Still you tell us—that our Master requires us even to deny ourselves; that this is the grand law of his kingdom; and without obeying it, we cannot be his disciples. But we contend that you are precisely in the same circumstances: we can prove that you also are required to exercise self-denial; and that this is the chief command you have to comply with in the service of the world. And mark the difference between us. Our Master requires us to deny only what is false and vain—yours, what is solid and true. Ours requires us to deny what would only make us disorderly and miserable—yours, what would render you peaceful and happy. Ours requires us only to deny the voice of passion and appetite—yours, the voice of reason and of conscience. Ours requires us to deny the body for the sake of the soul—yours, the soul for the sake of the body. Ours requires us to give up nothing but what he will more than repay —yours, to surrender an interest, for the loss of which you cannot be indemnified in time or eternity.

Since then it appears—that you cannot serve two masters—and since it is equally certain that you will serve one—we plead for God, and call upon you to serve Him. It is the

III.—Third division of our subject. Here I feel ready to draw back from my engagement: I am shocked to think that it should be found necessary to make a comparison between the ever-blessed God and idols. Has the depravity of the world risen to such a pitch, and are men so exceedingly blinded and infatuated, as to require a preacher to attempt to prove that it is better to serve God than mammon!—I feel also perplexed as to the proofs I shall adduce; the case seems too plain to need evidence: and of evidence there is no end. Let us make a selection of two articles, and

Remind you, first, of his VARIOUS AND UNDENIABLE CLAIMS in which he stands peculiar and supreme. There is such a thing as justice; and it consists in rendering to all their due. Render to God his due—be only just—and you must be religious. All you are and all you have is his: he gave you existence; and all your capacities of action and of enjoyment were not only derived from him, but are continued by him; "for in him we live and move and have our being." There is such a thing as gratitude; and it consists in endeavouring to make suitable returns for favours received. Endeavour to make suitable returns to God for the favours you have received from him—be only grateful, and you must be religious. Whose sun warms you? Whose air do you breathe? Who has fed you all your life long unto this day? When you were lost, who sent his own Son to seek and to save you? When you were in the bondage of corruption, who, by a price of infinite value, accomplished your release? Let all your mercies be summoned to appear around you—the blessings of infancy, of youth, of mature age; the blessings of Providence and of Grace; the blessings which you possess already, and those which, as attainable, you hope to enjoy —and your Preacher has only to come forward and say, "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable, which is your reasonable service." So simple are the principles from which the practice of religion is deduced!

Secondly, we would remind you of HIS DESIGNS IN EMPLOYING YOU IN HIS SERVICE. In these also, who is a God like unto him? Why does he require you to serve him? "Can a man be profitable unto God, as he that is wise may be profitable unto himself? Is it any pleasure to the ALMIGHTY that thou art righ-

teous; or gain to the MOST HIGH that thou makest thy way perfect!" He does not stand in need of you—but he knows that you stand in need of him, and that without him you can do nothing. Does he require your service, to display his grandeur, to exercise his authority, to establish his dominion? Hear his own language: "O that there was such a heart in them, that they would fear me, and keep all my commandments always—THAT IT MIGHT BE WELL WITH THEM AND WITH THEIR CHILDREN FOR EVER." He employs you, to invigorate your powers, to dignify your nature, to train you up for endless perfection, and to bestow upon you innumerable advantages under the notion of a reward. These advantages may be considered two ways. In the engagements of the master, and in the experience of the servants. These do not always agree. Men, as an allurement, frequently promise what they never perform; and those who have followed them have had bitter reason to complain of disappointment. But God is faithful; and as his promises are exceeding great and precious, so are they all yea and amen in Christ Jesus to the glory of God by us. He spreads before us in his word every attraction to encourage us. "Therefore thus saith the Lord God, Behold, my servants shall eat; but ye shall be hungry: behold, my servants shall drink; but ye shall be thirsty: behold, my servants shall rejoice; but ye shall be ashamed: behold, my servants shall sing for joy of heart; but ye shall cry for sorrow of heart, and shall howl for vexation of spirit." And has he not realized all this? Let us consult the experience of those who have served him. And observe the fairness of the examples to which we appeal. Some of you would be unqualified judges; you could not make a proper comparison, because you are only acquainted with one of the things to be compared. You know what the service of sin is; but you are strangers to the service of the Lord Jesus Christ. But there are persons who have tried both: after serving the world, they have served God. And if it were formerly better with them than now, what keeps them from going back? What detains them from the country whence they came out? They have opportunity to return; and are surrounded with the same temptations as others. They have found something more divine and satisfactory: they have tasted of the grapes of Eshcol, and they no longer sigh for the leeks and onions of Egypt. He is rising from his knees, where he has been saying, "Thou hast dealt well with thy servant, O Lord." Take him aside, and converse with him. He is able to give a reason of the hope that is in him. Why you often mourn. "But our sorrow shall be turned into joy: our very tears are blessed; and we are never more happy than when we can feel a broken heart and a contrite spirit!"—And the world frowns upon you. "But God smiles; and his favour is life. Heaven is my home: death is become my friend: Providence manages all my affairs; and I am careful for nothing."—And your happiness is all future. "No—I have earnests and foretastes of Heaven. I feel a peace which passeth all understanding; and sometimes I rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory. In his sanctuary I behold his power and his glory. In my closet I find it good to draw near to God. His statutes are my song in the house of my pilgrimage; and I rejoice in his word as one that findeth great spoil.—Once I thought like you. I supposed, if I began a religious course, I should never have another happy day—but I never had a happy day before. I have found nothing of the fetters and bondage of which I had heard, and by which I had been disgusted. His service has been perfect freedom; and none of his commands are grievous. And oh! could I now lay open my soul; could I make you see as I see, and feel as I feel!—O taste and see that the Lord is good; blessed is the man that trusteth in him." All this shews the importance of serving God. But whatever shews the importance of it, shews the wisdom of attending to it.

Let me then, my dear hearers, call upon you to make a choice. From this hour abandon God and his ways, and following your idols and your lusts, have all that they can give you—or, relinquishing the present evil world, take God for the strength of your soul, and your portion for ever. Which of these will you choose?—I cannot conclude without pressing you to a decision. I have already been classing you. My hope has formed one division; my fear, a second; my conviction, a third.

I have been HOPING that some of you will retire this evening, and join yourselves to the Lord in a perpetual covenant that shall not be forgotten; saying, "Lord, I am thine, save me. O Lord, other lords beside thee have had dominion over us, but by thee only will we make mention of thy name." Will none of you realize this pleasing expectation? Will none among you, my younger hearers, verify the language of prophecy, upon which so many ministers, so many parents have hoped! "One shall say, I am the Lord's; and another shall call himself by the name of Jacob; and another shall subscribe with his hand unto the Lord, and surname himself by the name of Israel."

—A larger number, I FEAR, will care for none of these things; but go forth, saying, with their rebellious predecessors, "I have loved strangers, and after them will I go." Let me give you warning from God. Remember, that he will assuredly vindicate the cause of his despised authority and goodness: "As for these mine enemies that would not that I should reign over them, bring them

forth, and slay them before my face." If you are determined to abandon God, God is determined to abandon you: "But my people would not hearken to my voice; and Israel would none of me: so I gave them up unto their own hearts' lust, and they walked in their own counsels." And have you considered the awfulness of your condition—"without God in the world!" Death will soon snatch you away from your houses and amusements; and what will you do, if your faith and hope be not in God—when you will have nothing but God left! And, even previous to this, an evil day may arrive. Though worldly things do not satisfy the mind, they divert it; and though they are a poor substitute for God, they render you less sensible of your need of him. But they are all uncertain: and what becomes of you when they are removed? To whom will you flee for help, and where will you leave your glory?

But an observation of the way in which divine admonition is commonly rendered useless CONVINCES me, that the generality of you will not decide with the former, nor positively refuse with the latter. "And as he reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come, Felix trembled, and answered, Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee." This is your model.—You wish to pause and consider. But we cannot allow this evasion; our commission requires an immediate reply: "To-day, if ye will hear his voice, harden not your heart: now is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation."—You wish to pause and consider. But you have no time for hesitation; you are dying while you make the proposal: "Boast not thyself of to-morrow, for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth."—You wish to pause and consider. But he may take your excuses for a final answer, as they are unquestionably a proof of present disinclination, and say, "None of the men that were bidden shall taste of my supper." "He is joined to idols; let him alone."—You wish to pause and consider. But the longer you waver, the harder you will find it to decide; objections and difficulties will every day multiply.—You wish to pause and consider—but when do you mean to determine? How much longer time do you require? Some of you have had twenty, forty, sixty years, to weigh things already, and are still undetermined. And what is it to decide, that you cannot come to a conclusion this hour, this moment? What room is there for comparison? what possibility is there of embarrassment? O shame of human nature! Here are persons requiring additional years to determine—whether hell or heaven is the best portion; whether the God of glory, or the god of this world, is the best master. "How long halt ye between two opinions? If the Lord be God, follow him: but if Baal be God, follow him." "Wherefore choose ye this day whom ye will serve"—"But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord." May God inspire us with this resolution. Amen.

SERMON XXIV.

THE FAMILY OF OUR LORD.

And he stretched forth his hand toward his disciples, and said, Behold my mother and my brethren! For whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother.—Matt. xii. 49, 50.

I ADDRESS this assembly in the language of our Saviour to the Pharisees—"What think ye of Christ?" And surely a more serious inquiry it is impossible to make. Your opinions upon various other subjects are comparatively of little consequence—But it is of the highest importance to entertain proper apprehensions of the person and character, the offices and work of Christ.

There is, however, another question which it is equally necessary to ask—What does Christ think of you! What you are in the sentiment of your fellow-creatures signifies little. It is a light thing to be judged of man's judgment. Your happiness does not depend upon him: he may be deceived in his conclusion—He that judgeth you is the Lord: his decision is infallible, and his sentence regulates your doom. Does He view you this evening as enemies or friends? As strangers or relations?—Is it possible to determine this? It is not only possible, but easy. Observe what he did, and remember what he said, in the days of his flesh. "And he stretched forth his hand toward his disciples, and said, Behold my mother and my brethren! For whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother."

Our Saviour preached in various places. He was now in a private house—and is said to be "talking to the people." It marks the ease, the simplicity, the familiarity with which he spake. When a preacher can exemplify this mode of address, without sinking, he is peculiarly pleasing to his hearers, and often most successful in the force and sublimity of his thoughts. "While he yet talked to the people, behold, his mother and his brethren stood without, desiring to speak with him."—What was the design of his friends it is impossible to determine. But they had something interesting to communicate, and could not approach him for the intervening multitude. The people therefore conveyed along the notice of his relations from one to another till it reached the person who stood by him—"Then ONE said unto him, Be-

hold, thy mother and brethren stand without, desiring to speak with thee." Our blessed Lord was despised and rejected of men; but there were some who knew his worth, and loved and honoured him—and at hearing of his mother and his brethren, they were ready to exclaim, O happy brethren! to have such a brother! O happy mother! to have such a son!—Our Saviour was not so confined to his subject as to refuse a new idea suggested by the occasion; therefore, knowing their thoughts, he tells them of another connection with himself: from his family according to the flesh, he leads them to his spiritual kindred; and from a union with him, which was temporal, and confined to few, he leads them to one which was everlasting, and embraced all good men. "But he answered and said unto him that told him, Who is my mother? and who are my brethren?—AND HE STRETCHED FORTH HIS HAND TOWARD HIS DISCIPLES, AND SAID, BEHOLD MY MOTHER AND MY BRETHREN! FOR WHOSOEVER SHALL DO THE WILL OF MY FATHER WHICH IS IN HEAVEN, THE SAME IS MY BROTHER, AND SISTER, AND MOTHER."

Whence we observe, that OBEDIENCE TO THE DIVINE WILL IS AN EVIDENCE OF OUR BEING RELATED TO JESUS CHRIST. Our Lord here gives us the character and the privilege of his disciples.

I. Their CHARACTER—they do the will of his Father.

II. Their PRIVILEGE—they are his brother, his sister, his mother. "Remember me, O Lord, with the favour that thou bearest unto thy people: O visit me with thy salvation; that I may see the good of thy chosen, that I may rejoice in the gladness of thy nation, that I may glory with thine inheritance."

I. We have the CHARACTER of his disciples. He describes them as DOING THE WILL OF HIS FATHER WHICH IS IN HEAVEN. All obey—But some do the will of the devil; some do the will of man; some do their own will; and some do the will of God.

—Some do the will of the devil. This is a dreadful charge; but it is fully supported by the address of our Saviour to the Jews—"Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do." And what is all sin, but "the work of the devil?" "For the devil sinneth from the beginning." He, therefore, who lives in the practice of sin, co-operates with him, resembles him, strives to please him, fulfils his wishes. The devil loves pride, and the sinner cherishes it; he takes pleasure in revenge, and the sinner indulges it; his empire is maintained by iniquity, and the sinner commits it.

—Some do the will of men. They are entirely governed by others; they receive the law from the opinions, maxims, and manners of their companions, superiors, relations; from the conversation received by tradition from their fathers; from the example of the multitude. And by no better authorities than these are many influenced, even in the concerns of religion! But "we ought to obey God rather than men;" and "to live the rest of our time in the flesh, not to the lusts of men, but to the will of God."

—Some do their own will. They are as regardless of the authority of God, as if they were persuaded that his being and perfections were a fable: they live without him in the world; never asking, when they engage in any course of action, whether it will please or offend him, whether he has forbidden or enjoined it? They follow only the bias of their own inclination; and this being, since the Fall, depraved and irregular, carries them widely astray from their duty and happiness. For it is as dangerous as it is criminal to obey such a guide. Hence to be abandoned to its influence is spoken of as the greatest curse —"So I gave them up unto their own hearts' lust: and they walked in their own counsels." It has been said of children, that they are undone if they have their own will; and the reason is, because they are not wise enough to choose the good, and refuse the evil. But this is much more true of man: if he has his own will, he will be sure to ruin himself; for a sinner is much more likely to make a foolish choice than a child; and he who wants grace, has less understanding than he who wants years.

But the Christian makes the will of God the grand, the only rule of his life; and every consideration induces him to say, "Not my will, but thine be done." His authority over us is supreme, and his relations to us are numerous. He is our Father, and we owe him honour; our Master, and we owe him fear; our Benefactor, and we owe him gratitude; our God, and we owe him obedience, devotion —all we are, and all we have! Nor does our obligation spring only from his dominion over us, and his claims to us, but from the very nature of his will, which is wise, and righteous, and good.

That we may not be ignorant of his will, he has been pleased to reveal it. This revelation is contained in the Scriptures of Truth. Opening these, we find all needful information: they are a lamp unto our feet, and a light unto our paths. They contain general principles and particular rules. There are described the duties we owe to ourselves, to our fellow creatures, and to God: the duties which spring from the various connections and conditions of life; the duties of kings and of servants; the duties of prosperity and of adversity. Viewing us as sinners, they shew unto us the way of salvation, and preach repentance towards God and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ.

The man therefore that would do the will of God walks by this rule. He repairs to the

Scripture—not for advice, but law. He enters the sanctuary of revelation, and bowing before the lively oracles of God, he cries, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" "Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth." For you will observe that his concern with the will of God lies not in knowing, but in DOING it. And indeed if this be not in our desire and design, when we search for the will of God, we are not likely to be honest in our investigations, or successful in our attempts. For "he that doth his will, shall know of the doctrine whether it be of God; and we shall knew, if we follow on to know the Lord."—But allowing it to be possible to obtain the clearest knowledge, unaccompanied with obedience, it would be useless—for "if ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them"—yea, it would be even injurious, by enhancing our sin and aggravating our condemnation—for "to him that knoweth to do good and doth it not, to him it is sin." "And that servant which knew his Lord's will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes. For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall much be required; and to whom men have committed much, of him will they ask the more."

To be a Christian then, you must act, and live—and act and live as God would have you: you must do the will of our Father which is in heaven. By two things you may know whether your obedience be such as will class you in the number of our Lord's disciples. For, first, their obedience is AFFECTIONATE, arising from a desire to please and glorify God. Hence the declaration of our Saviour, "I call you not servants, but friends." This was not to release them from an obligation to obedience, but to purify and elevate the principle of it. And his own language is, in a subordinate degree, the experience of all his followers—"I delight to do thy will, O God; yea, thy law is within my heart:" "My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work." This is every thing, in the view of God. He would have us, in his service, to be liberal and generous: he upholds us by "his free Spirit." He values not the forced submission of the slave: he disdains those actions, in the performance of which the will revolts against the obligation. His demand is, "My son, give me thy heart:" and when this is given, nothing else can he withhold: then the eyes are open to see, the ears to hear, the lips to praise, the hands to communicate; and the man "presents his body a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is his reasonable service."

For, secondly, their obedience is IMPARTIAL. I speak here of their aim and their disposition. With regard to these, they have no reserve, no objections, no exceptions. Their concern extends to every thing, whether great or little, whether easy or difficult, whether pleasing or repulsive: they esteem all his commandments concerning all things to be right, and they hate every false way. The necessity of this will readily appear. "For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all." The reasoning by which this is established is solid: for if a man voluntarily transgress one of the commands of God, why does he observe the rest?—Not from a principle of obedience; for this would lead him to observe the command he transgresses, as well as those he observes—seeing they issue from the same authority, and are enforced by the same motives: "for he that said, Do not commit adultery, said also, Do not kill: now if thou commit no adultery, yet if thou kill, thou art become a transgressor of the law"—He therefore obeys because the injunction happens to fall in with his humour, or reputation, or advantage. But if doing what we like, and refusing what we do not like, be obedience—it is obedience to our own will, and not to the will of God; and by such a submission we despise God in reality, while we profess to serve him: we exclude his authority, and establish our own pleasure as the governing principle of our lives. This therefore annihilates the system of composition, and all endeavours to balance virtues against vices, and to atone for the indulgence of sin by the performance of duty. For unless you regard the will of God universally, whatever you do, springs not from a principle of religion, but from some other source—for if you performed any one duty because God had commanded it, you would most certainly practise every other for the same reason; and if you avoided any one sin because God had forbidden it, you would unquestionably forsake every other on the same ground. It is in vain for you therefore to plead that you avoid that which is evil, unless you cleave to that which is good. It is in vain for you to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, if you do not keep yourselves unspotted from the world. It is in vain for you to be faithful to your engagements with your fellow-creatures, if you are strangers to devotion—this is to be moral, without piety: or to pray and hear the word of God, and not provide things honest in the sight of all men—this is to be pious, without morality. It is in vain for you to assemble together in public, if you never enter your closets; or to be saints in the house of God, if you are sinners in your own. It is in vain for you to listen to the Gospel, while it teaches you doctrines of acknowledged importance, if you do not learn by it to deny all ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present world. In all these instances in which you appear to conform to the will of God, there is not one act of true obedience; for true obedience consults the will of God, and this enjoins an attention to the

things you neglect, as much as to those which from other considerations you regard.—And thus having described the character of his disciples, let us,

II. Survey their PRIVILEGE. Our Saviour considers them as his relations; regards them as his kindred—they form one family with himself. "He stretched forth his hand toward his disciples, and said, Behold MY MOTHER and MY BRETHREN! for whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is MY BROTHER, and SISTER, and MOTHER." As such I view them, as such I will behave towards them: they shall enjoy every advantage which can flow from connections so intimate. For our Lord does not speak ceremoniously: his words are true and faithful. Let us see what we can find, to embody the meaning of his expressions.

As soon as we hear him claiming his disciples as his kindred, we look, First, for family-likeness—and we have it. "Whom he did foreknow, them he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the first-born among many brethren." "The first man is of the earth, earthy; the second man is the Lord from heaven. As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy; and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly. And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly." The resemblance, indeed, is not complete in this world, but it is real; it is sufficient to shew that they have a common origin. One end governs them; their inclinations harmonize; the mind which was in him is also in them; and as he was, so are they also in the world,—meek and lowly, tender and compassionate, patient and forgiving, active and zealous. And the likeness is incessantly growing, and becoming more and more visible; so that, "beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, they are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord." And by-and-by it will be perfect and entire, lacking nothing. "When he shall appear, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is." The likeness will be extended to the whole man: he shall change this vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the mighty working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself."

By claiming them as his kindred, he, Secondly, confers honour upon them. It is always glorious to belong to persons of illustrious endowments, and who are the admiration of the age. It is in our favour to have it known that we are in the number of their friends, and are prized by them; it shews their opinion of us, and it is supposed that their esteem will not be wasted upon worthlessness. Their own connections have the greatest opportunities of improvement by them; and often gratuitously obtain credit for qualities which they never possess. By relative union we seem to have a right to appropriate some of their talents and virtues: some of their lustre is unavoidably reflected upon those who stand near these polished bodies. Persons have been anxious to go even far back, to claim relation to some extraordinary characters. How would some of you feel, to be acknowledged as the kindred of the king, who is called the fountain of honour? This was the glory of James and Joses, and Simeon, and Judas, who were the brethren of our Lord. This was the honour vouchsafed to Mary his mother, and for which all generations shall call her blessed—Think of being the mother of One who was the image of the invisible God, the first-born of every creature, whom the winds and seas obeyed, whom all the angels in heaven are commanded to worship, the deliverer of millions from the disgrace of sin and the wrath to come—No wonder a certain woman, while hearing him, unable to suppress her emotions, "lifted up her voice, and said unto him, Blessed is the womb that bare thee, and the paps which thou hast sucked."—"But he said, Yea, rather, blessed are they that hear the word of God and keep it." Does he then design to exclude his own relations from spiritual affinity with him? Or does he discountenance natural affection and duty? Far from it—But he would intimate that we need not envy Mary; we ourselves may become his kindred in a nobler sense; "such honour have all the saints"—"Behold my mother and my brethren! for whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother."

Thirdly, If they are his relations, he will love them. What would you think of a man who had no regard for a BROTHER, a SISTER? Where should we think of looking for affection, if not among those who are attached by ties of nature, by habits of early intercourse, by mutual participations of every youthful enjoyment, by the reciprocal performance of a thousand tender and endearing offices! But conceive of whatever is attractive and binding in the fond image of a MOTHER; one, who after nameless pains and perils gave thee birth, nursed thee on her knees, fed thee at her breast, and through sleepless nights and anxious days watched over thy tender progress—Bring before your mind a man, all genius and sensibility, viewing the picture of a mother,—

"Faithful remembrancer of one so dear,"—

recalling maternal smiles, and the dress in which with blessings she dismissed him to school—forgetting a thousand other things, but remembering her "nightly visits," her "morning bounties," her "constant flow of love that knew no fall!"—But no mother was ever so dear to an admiring child, as his disciples

are to the Saviour. Every thing is defective in holding forth his love; never was love so tender, never was love so tried; it is stronger than death: it passeth knowledge.—See it when he was upon earth. His little family with which he was surrounded was a fair specimen of his people in all ages. How kindly he bore with their infirmities! with what gentleness he reproved them! with what eagerness he encouraged them! with what freedom he unbosomed himself to them!—"And loving his own who were in the world, he loved them unto the end"—and gave proof of it by washing their feet, and then dying for them—by which he proclaimed that he considered nothing too low for him to do, nothing too painful for him to suffer for their sakes.

Fourthly, Since he declares them to be his relations, he will provide for them. "If any provide not for his own, and especially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel." And will he incur a reproach which he so severely condemns? It was well for the patriarch and his sons, in the famine which raged all over the country, that they had one so nearly allied to them, who reigned over the land of Egypt, and had the command of its resources. "Then sent Joseph, and called his father Jacob to him and all his kindred, threescore and fifteen souls," and the land of Goshen yielded them supplies. Christians, you have a relation who is Lord of all: "the earth is his, and the fulness thereof." See those who rise in the state: they soon draw their connections after them. And many evils may arise from this among men. Sinecures may be multiplied, places may be formed in order to be filled, and the state may be burdened to maintain the friends of those who are in power—while offices may be disposed of, not according to qualification, but affinity. But Jesus Christ injures none by the elevation of his kindred; and he prepares them all for the stations they occupy.—And surely, if they are not all exalted, he will suffer none of them to famish. "O fear the Lord, ye his saints; for there is no want to them that fear him. The lions do lack and suffer hunger, but they that seek the Lord shall not want any good thing." You may rejoice in all the glory and empire to which he is advanced—you are interested in it—it is for you. "He is made head over all things unto his body, the Church." "He has power given him over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as the Father hath given him." And not satisfied with his own personal dignity, he wishes his friends to sit with him upon his throne; and this is his language, "Father, I will that those which thou hast given me be with me where I am, to behold my glory." "And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one."

Again: Since he regards them as his brethren, his sisters, his mother, he will keep up an intercourse with them. He will correspond with them by means of his word; and many a precious epistle will they receive from him, unfolding the sentiments of his heart, and telling them where he now is, and what he is preparing for them. He will also come to see them: he will peculiarly visit them in trouble; he is a "Friend born for adversity." "And better is a neighbour that is near, than a brother that is far off." "When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the floods, they shall not overflow thee: when thou passest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned, neither shall the flames kindle upon thee." For,

Finally, he will defend them. When Moses went forth and "saw one of his brethren suffer wrong, he defended him, and avenged him that was oppressed, and smote the Egyptian." We see how Esther exerted herself to preserve from the malice of Haman her nation and her uncle's house—"How can I endure to see the destruction of my kindred?" And will the Saviour be an unconcerned spectator of the dangers of his people? Let their enemies beware. In opposing them, they persecute him: he that toucheth them, toucheth the apple of his eye. No weapon formed against them shall prosper. Their Redeemer is mighty; and he will plead their cause. "Happy art thou, O Israel: who is like unto thee, O people saved by the Lord, the shield of thy help, and who is the sword of thine excellency! and thine enemies shall be found liars unto thee, and thou shalt tread upon their high places."

From the explanation of the words which has been given, we derive four interesting reflections: with which we shall conclude.

The First leads us to admire the grace and condescension of our Lord Jesus Christ. When we look into the world, we find those of rank and consequence detaching themselves as much as possible from those below them: they are ashamed to be too familiar with their inferiors, though the inferiority consists in things which possess very little, if any, real and intrinsical excellency. Why should a man think me beneath him, because he has a greater abundance of "thick clay?" Is wealth dignity? "Silver and gold have I none," says Peter—So then a man may be an inspired apostle and able to work miracles, and be poor. "Foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; while the Son of man hath not where to lay his head," says our Saviour—A person therefore may be the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of his person; and be destitute of worldly possessions. Why should a man swell, as he passes by me, because he wears a title?

"Pigmies are pigmies still, though perch'd on Alps!
"And pyramids are pyramids in vales."

Take a prince: he has only five senses; he is made of dust, and is returning to dust again, and in that very day his thoughts perish. See those who, springing from obscurity, have soared high in worldly success: how unwilling are they to be found in company with their kindred who remain in indigence! how eager are they to conceal the relation! But here is a subject of wonder, which may well lead us to exclaim, "Lord, what is man, that thou art mindful of him; or the son of man, that thou visitest him!" See Him that has all power in heaven and in earth, the King of kings and Lord of lords, stooping from his glorious majesty, looking to him that is poor, searching for his connections who dwell in houses of clay, and desirous of publishing the relation—See him "stretching forth his hand toward his disciples," and saying, "Behold my mother and my brethren! For whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother."

The Second remark leads us to contemplate the indemnities and advantages of religion. It is readily acknowledged, that in following the Son of God, we must deny ourselves and take up our cross: a succession of painful services will be required of us; various sacrifices are indispensable.—But "verily there is a reward for the righteous." "Godliness is profitable unto all things; having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come." "Verily I say unto you, There is no man that hath left house, or parents, or brethren, or wife, or children, for the kingdom of God's sake, who shall not receive manifold more in this present time, and in the world to come life everlasting."—It is no easy thing to pursue the will of God inflexibly to the end: the performance of it, in many cases, will deprive us of friends, create us enemies, and draw upon us reproach. But it will never suffer us to repent of our engagement: it requires of us nothing mean; it withholds from us nothing glorious.—Is divine audience a privilege? This is connected with obedience. "God heareth not sinners; but if a man be a worshipper of God and doth his will, him he heareth." Is an assurance of immortality a privilege? This is connected with obedience. "The world passeth away, and the lusts thereof; but he that doeth the will of God, abideth for ever."—Is a union with the family of Jesus Christ a privilege! This is connected with obedience. "Behold my mother and my brethren! For whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother."

The Third remark leads us to observe the holiness of the Gospel. Of this we are perpetually reminded. It is insured by its promises as well as by its commands, by its privileges as well as by its duties. Its blessings, however free, are only to be enjoyed in a course of obedience. The family of Jesus is like heaven: "the unrighteous are excluded. "This is the law of the house: upon the top of the mountain the whole limit thereof round about shall be most holy. Behold this is the law of the house." When he was upon earth he did not seek to establish an indiscriminate empire, or to draw a large heterogeneous mass after him: his fan was in his hand: by the application of various tests, he selected those who followed him from principle and inclination, and drove back the cowardly, the mercenary, the false-hearted. What! can the brethren of Jesus Christ be earthly, sensual, devilish! "He that is joined to the Lord is of one spirit." And "if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his." And therefore they who discharge you from obedience, and promise you security, belie every word of the Bible, and oppose the very design of religion, which is, by sanctification, to assimilate man to the image of God. If therefore you value the connection, and are desirous of entering this family, remember, there is only one way of access to it. Do not imagine you can elude the determination of our Saviour, and enjoy the privilege without the character of his disciples. But if this be the only way of admission, it stands open to all. Did your alliance depend upon genius, literature, affluence, or office, many of you must despair. But his family is not of this world. From the hope of the Gospel none are excluded, but those who wickedly exclude themselves.—"Therefore, as He who hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation:" and—pray, with David, "Teach me to do thy will, for thou art my God; thy Spirit is good; lead me into the land of uprightness"—and then you may be assured of your inclusion, whatever be your talents, whatever be your circumstances. "For WHOSOEVER shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother."

The Fourth reflection leads us to enforce upon Christians the duty derived from their alliance. Remember that you are "no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of THE HOUSEHOLD OF GOD." Walk worthy of the vocation wherewith you are called. Demean yourselves as the relations of the Lord of life and glory.—Let brotherly love continue. Let there be no strife between you and your fellow-Christians, for you are brethren. Do not envy the world; it is a reproach to your family; you are placed in a higher order than they; you have better titles, honours, riches, pleasures—Rejoice and glory in the connection: under a sense of your unworthiness, let the thought of it revive you; under the reproach

of the world, let the thought of it animate you—let them vilify, let them cast out your name as evil; He is yours, and you are his, and you are precious in his sight.—And, finally, let it reconcile you to death; cherish the pleasing, the familiar notion of it which the words of your Lord supply—It is only GOING HOME, and—Home

> "Is the lov'd retreat of peace and plenty;
> "Where, supporting and supported,
> "Polish'd friends and dear relations
> "Meet and mingle into bliss."

Such is an earthly residence. What is heaven? What will our Father's house be, where all the dear members of the family will be assembled together? Why do you wish to be detained from HOME?—How unnatural to long to be always strangers and pilgrims upon earth! How unaccountable is the aversion you express to a messenger, which comes only "to gather you unto your own people!" If persons loved not to travel, surely one thing would reconcile them to it—the prospect of HOME; especially if their dearest friend was gone before, and had promised to be there to receive them. And if the thought of leaving some few behind pained them, they would be relieved from much of the distress, if they knew that these friends would soon, very soon follow, and that probably they may pass upon the road the vehicle destined to bring them. ———Christians! what you have found most like home below has been the sanctuary. There you held communion with your heavenly Father, and embraced your friends and companions in his presence—and for "their sakes" you said, "Peace be within thee." There you longed to appear, and you found it good to be there. But as the blessedness was imperfect, so it was transient. You blended with few, and soon separated, to mix with others very differently minded. But when you ascend, and enter your Father's house above, you will never more go out; you will join the general assembly—and "be for ever with the Lord." "Wherefore comfort one another with these words."

SERMON XXV.*

THE SAVIOUR HONOURED IN HIS PEOPLE:

(A SERMON PREACHED AT ST. IVES, ON THE 8TH OF OCTOBER, 1812, BEFORE THE BEDFORD UNION.)

I am glorified in them.—John xvii. 10.

WHO in this congregation lives without prayer?—

This is a question which it is impossible for your preacher to determine. But, in so large an assembly, there are probably some, if not many of this unhappy description: and if he knew where you were sitting, he would look towards you, not with anger, but with pity, and say—"My dear hearers. You may be respectable in your character; you may be caressed by your connections; you may be prosperous in your secular concerns—but you are living without God in the world; you are strangers to your duty, your honour, your happiness; you are wholly unlike HIM whom as Christians we profess to resemble, and who is perpetually calling upon us to follow his example."

—If YOU can live without prayer, HE did not. "In the days of his flesh he offered up prayers and supplications, with strong crying and tears, unto him that was able to save him from death, and was heard in that he feared."

In the sacred history we often read of his praying: but the Holy Ghost has more fully recorded and signalized the prayer contained in the chapter before us. It was delivered in the open air just as he was going to suffer. He had left the communion chamber; and was approaching the garden of Gethsemane. He paused near Cedron. The hum of the adjoining metropolis was diminished. It was towards midnight. The moon was walking in brightness; it was at full. He was now to take an affectionate farewell of his immediate disciples, who stood around him weeping. He considered them as the depositaries of his truth, and the representatives of his Church in all ages; "and lifting up his eyes to heaven," he commends them to the blessing of his Fa-

* ADVERTISEMENT:—The Author of this Sermon is not a member of the Association before whom it was delivered. But his coalition is prevented by distance only. Were he contiguously situated, he should esteem co-operation his duty and his privilege: for nothing can be more consistent with his convictions, than the importance of the object; or more congenial to his feelings, than the liberality of the plan by which this union is distinguished. Hence, being invited to preach at one of its meetings, he most readily complied.

But he acknowledges he did not consent to *publish* so willingly, notwithstanding the earnest and unanimous request of his Christian friends, and his brethren in the ministry. He was aware of some considerable difference between the claims of a sermon preached and a sermon published. In the former, a freedom occasionally bordering on colloquial, may be readily allowed, and even applauded: while the same commendation, or even apology, will not be conceded in the latter.

It is a very desirable, but not a very easy thing to give the effect of novelty to well-known and familiar truth. Some little sacrifices of refinement, even fastidious criticism would surely tolerate, to excite in the mass of hearers that interest which will secure attention and aid recollection. What by its dulness composes the mind; what by its smoothness slides off from it; what by its subtilty evaporates in the mere act of hearing, will do little good. Something must strike, and penetrate, and remain: something must be taken away, which the individual will think of when alone, and talk of when in company. *The words of the wise*, says Solomon, *are as goads, and as nails fastened by the masters of assemblies.* Nothing is more to be guarded against than a tame unimpressive correctness, that will subject a preacher to the reflection of Quintilian, "His greatest excellency is—that he has no fault; and his greatest fault is—that he has no excellency."

It was the wish of those, who by their candid importunity have rendered themselves responsible to the public for this publication, that the discourse should retain the boldness and vivacity of popular and free address, and be presented as it was delivered. This the author has been enabled to do perfectly, as the sermon was secured in short hand.

ther and our Father, his God and our God. And behold the principal argument on which his intercession rests. "All mine are thine, and thine are mine, and I am glorified in them. Whatever is done for my people is done for ME. It will advance my HONOUR. I AM GLORIFIED IN THEM."

Let us endeavour to exemplify the truth of this sentiment, and shew, in six ways, how CHRIST IS GLORIFIED IN CHRISTIANS.

I. He is glorified in them BY THE DERIVATION OF ALL THEIR EXCELLENCES FROM HIM.

What a change do we annually witness in nature! After a few months of wintry dreariness and desolation, the enlivening spring returns. The ground is decked in green. The flowers appear on the earth. The trees assume their foliage. The leaves guard the buds; the blossoms are succeeded by fruit; and the fruit swells, colours, and matures against the perfect day. All this is owing to the influence of the sun; and—the sun is glorified in our fields and gardens. An architect rears an edifice. It is admired for its beauty, or its grandeur, by all who inspect it. But the praise belongs to the builder, not to the building; and—the workman is glorified in the work. A benefactor takes a youth in all the rudeness of ignorance. He awakens and cultivates his powers. He adorns him with science; he forms him into character; and sends him forth to serve his generation; and—the tutor is glorified in the pupil. The Saviour of sinners is the maker of all things; "all things were made by him, and without him was not any thing made that was made." And he is glorified in all. Impressions of his power, wisdom, and goodness are left, upon the largest and the least: "All his works praise him." And is he less glorified in the new creation than in the old! Has he not said, "Behold, I create new heavens and a new earth; and the former shall not be remembered nor come into mind." If believers were once darkness, and HE opened the eyes of their understanding: if they were once in the bondage of corruption, and HE made them free: if they were once degraded and perishing in all the ruins of the Fall, and HE made them an eternal excellency, the joy of many generations—it undeniably follows that he is glorified in them. Hence it is said, "This people have I formed for myself; they shall shew forth my praise. They shall be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that he may be glorified. I will place salvation in Jacob for Israel my glory."

All the subjects of divine grace are made sensible of this truth. In HIS name they rejoice. In HIS righteousness they are exalted. They know that by HIS stripes they are healed. They know that from HIS fulness they receive, and grace for grace. And as Joab, when Rabbah was ready to fall, sends to David his sovereign to assume the honour, "lest," says he, "the city be taken and be called after my name;" so the Christian is concerned that his Lord and Saviour should wear the glory of all his attainments and achievements. "If I have performed a duty properly, HE enabled me to discharge it. If I have borne a trial becomingly, HE enabled me to endure it. If I have vanquished an enemy, HE enabled me to overcome. We are more than conquerors through 'him that loved us.' Not unto US, O Lord, not unto US, but unto THY name give glory, for thy mercy and for thy truth's sake. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father, be glory and dominion for ever and ever, Amen."

Here it may be proper to observe, that as Christians, you should never deny what he has done for your souls. Though you ought to be humble, you equally ought to be thankful: but you cannot thank him for a blessing he has never conferred, or a work he has never accomplished. And why should you be unwilling to acknowledge it! If you can say, Whereas I was once blind, I now see: and whereas I was once dead in trespasses and sins, I am now walking in newness of life—you are not praising the subject, but the AUTHOR: and he is glorified in you.

II. He is glorified IN THEIR HOLY WALK.

Dr. Watts has well observed—

> "Thus shall we best proclaim abroad
> The honours of our Saviour God,
> When the salvation reigns within,
> And grace subdues the power of sin."

These lines refer to the address of Paul to Titus: "Exhort servants to be obedient unto their own masters, and to please them well in all things: not answering again; not purloining, but shewing all good fidelity; that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things." I wish you to notice this address the more, because of the character adduced. It is observable that in the illustration of his subject, the Apostle does not bring forward a prince, or a nobleman. He does not mention even a master—but a servant. How easily and commonly men deceive themselves! How many are ready to imagine, that they should do wonders if they were placed in higher stations, or were possessed of greater talents! They forget, that he who is not faithful in little, will never be faithful in much—that every individual, however situated or endowed, has some influence—that even A SERVANT may roll away reproach, and recommend the Gospel by its amiable and moral operation in social life—even A SERVANT may ADORN the doctrine of a God our Saviour IN ALL THINGS.

Upon the same principle speaks the apostle Peter. He supposes a case by no means an unusual one. The wife is called by divine grace, while the husband remains unconverted. She naturally feels a concern for his

salvation. Her first endeavour is to bring him under those instructions which have proved useful to herself. But he refuses to hear. He will not "obey the word." Is there then no other moral expedient? Says the Apostle, you may "win him without the word," while he beholds "your chaste conversation coupled with fear," and sees that you are less attentive to the decoration of your person than to the cultivation of Christian tempers, and especially that "ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which in the sight of God is of great price."

Let us not hastily pass over this part of our subject. Professors of religion! Be harmless and blameless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a wicked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world, holding forth the word of life. The eyes of many are upon you. They are anxious to find something, not to remove their unhappy prejudices, but to confirm them. They judge of your religion, by you. This is indeed wrong—but so it is. You appeal to the Scripture; but THEY appeal to you: and the only estimate they form, will be taken from the representations you give, and the impressions you make. And should not these representations be accurate? Should not these impressions be favourable? Should not the picture do some justice to the features of the original it is intended to hold forth and make known?

You well know that the doctrines we preach are often supposed to lead to licentiousness, or at least that they are not very friendly to holiness and good works. If the supposition was true, we should deserve, for inculcating them, all the reprobation we sometimes meet with. But we affirm it is not true. We contend from Sabbath to Sabbath that these are doctrines "according to godliness." Yet after all—we must come to you for our most striking proofs. "Ye are our epistles, known and read of all men." When we can address such cavillers and say—"Come with us, and you shall see these principles in practice. Behold these advocates for evangelical truth. See how humble they are under applause. See how forgiving they are under provocation. See, when riches increase, how little they set their hearts upon them. Enter their shops and warehouses—see what justice and fairness distinguish all their dealings. Enter their houses—see what cleanliness, decency, order, and harmony prevail there. See how the wife reverences her husband; and see how the husband loves his wife even as himself. See how the parents provoke not their children to wrath, but train them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord; and see how the children obey their parents in all things. See how masters give unto their own servants that which is just and equal, knowing that they also have a Master in heaven; and see how servants obey, in all things, their masters according to the flesh, not with eye service, as men-pleasers, but in singleness of heart, fearing God"—when we can appeal to facts like these, we put to silence the ignorance of foolish men. Our hearts are encouraged, and our hands are strengthened. We live, if ye stand fast, in the Lord: and Jesus Christ looking down from heaven says, I am glorified in them.

What then are we to think—excuse the association of terms—of these religious transgressors, whose tempers and conduct are always at variance with their pretensions? "One sinner destroyeth much good." An unholy professor of religion is a judgment upon the place in which he lives. If I had such characters now to address, I would say—"By your means the way of truth is evil spoken of, and the worthy name blasphemed by which you are called. You perplex the weak, and you distress the strong. You strike your preachers dumb. You justify and harden the wicked in their iniquity. You lead many to think that all religion is but a system of hypocrisy. The destruction of thousands will lie at your door. They would long ago have attended the Gospel, but they saw that YOU were not the better for your boasted doctrines and privileges. Your servants and children see in you the same pride and passions as in others; and witness the mixture of family prayers and quarrels. Your neighbours see that you are as hard-hearted and as close-handed as any around you; and that while you are talking of another world you are keeping a keen look-out after this. O that we could exclude you from our assemblies—or, as God may give you repentance, O that you had invisible bodies, and could enter and withdraw unseen, that no one might ever imagine you had the least connection with us."

III. He is glorified in them, by THE CHEERFULNESS OF THEIR LIVES.

All men seek happiness; and if they perceive that you find what they seek after in vain; though they turn from pleasure to wealth, from wealth to fame, from fame to friendship, from friendship to science—this is likely to awaken their attention, to conciliate their regard, and to induce them to take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew, saying, we will go with you, for we have heard that God is with you.

It is commonly supposed that religion is a mopish and melancholy thing; that it prescribes a constant course of restraints; that it requires us to walk in a way which, though it may end in everlasting life, is full of thorns and briers, and scorpions. Such a prospect must naturally and unavoidably terrify and disgust. And hence this prejudice will be found to be as injurious as it is common. For present feelings are the most powerful. The constitution of man is such, that he must

have present gratification. He is thirsty, and must drink; and if there be no fountain near, he will kneel down to the puddle. Now, would you confirm a prejudice so general and so fatal as this, by long demure faces; by sighs and groans as if you were always at a funeral; by your insensibility to the beauties of nature, and indifference to the bounties of Providence; by indulging those peevish, fretful tempers which make you "a continual dropping in a rainy day;" by your sinking in the day of adversity, and drawing upon yourself the reflection of Eliphaz, "Behold, thou hast instructed many, and thou hast strengthened the weak hands; thy words have upholden him that was falling, and thou hast strengthened the feeble knees—but now it is come upon thee, and thou faintest; it toucheth thee, and thou art troubled. Is not this thy fear, thy confidence, thy hope, and the uprightness of thy way?" Would you lead people to think that your Master is a tyrant, and his service bondage? Would you appear to be less happy in serving the Lord than in serving sin? Would you shew that in exchanging the world for the Church you passed from liberty into a dungeon, and left a fruitful field for a barren land, or a wilderness of drought! It must needs be that offences come; but woe to that man by whom the offence cometh! Be alive, my brethren, to your duty, if not to your privileges; and render your religion as attractive as it is important!

I go back to the primitive Christians—*They* learned in whatsoever state they were therewith to be content. In every thing they gave thanks. If sorrowful, they were always rejoicing. They did not think it necessary to wade through a sea of soul trouble to authorize them to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. They did not suffer a sense of their unworthiness and imperfections, though it kept them humble, to make them miserable or to deprive them of hope. They did not torment themselves about futurity, but cast all their care on One who cared for them. They did not view death as the king of terrors, but as their deliverer and their friend. The day of judgment did not keep them aghast; they waited for it, and loved his appearing. Here I see every thing as it ought to be. After this I turn to modern professors, and here I behold a difference which can only be accounted for on one of these two principles: either that Christianity is changed since; or, that we do not understand it, and receive it aright. The former solution is inadmissible. Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever. There is the same efficacy in his blood. There is the same power in his arm. There is the same love in his heart. The promises are the same. The throne of grace is the same. Heaven is the same. Providence is the same. No, Christians; the difference is to be sought, not in your system, but in yourselves. Seriously therefore examine your experience. Pray that you may know what is the hope of your calling, and what is the glory of the riches of his inheritance in the saints. Be concerned to face a reproaching world, and with boldness to tell them,

> "The men of grace have found
> "Glory begun below,
> "And heavenly fruits on earthly ground
> "From faith and hope will grow."

Shew that no danger can terrify you; that no loss can impoverish you. Shew that if the reed fails, the rock remains; if the cistern be dried up, the fountain of living water flows on. Say, with the Church, "Although the fig tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vine; the labour of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls: yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation. Rejoice in the Lord always; and again I say, rejoice."

IV. He is glorified in them BY THEIR READINESS TO SUFFER FOR HIS SAKE.

It was to the honour of Rachel that Jacob served for her seven years, and that his regard was sufficient to turn the toil into pleasure. It always tends to the praise of an individual, when those who best know him, are ready to make any sacrifices or to endure any hardships in his service. The strength of wise attachment implies great excellency. The impressions made by character are always the most deep and wonderful. Scarcely for a righteous man will one die, yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. It is easy to apply this to the subject before us. It reflects comparatively but little honour upon the Redeemer to follow him when all is peaceful and inviting: but when we are called to deny ourselves and take up our cross; to go forth to him without the camp, bearing his reproach; to regard father and mother, and wife and children, as nothing when valued against him: to leave all, and lose all, for his sake—Then a Christian has an opportunity to evince the sincerity and fervency of his love to the Lord Jesus; and to say practically—and people will believe him—"He is so glorious in himself, he is so dear to my affections, he is so essential to every particle of my happiness, that, whatever be the consequence, I cannot return from following after him."

What did Peter and John when they were dismissed with ignominy from the council? They went away "rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name." Hear Paul's account of his sufferings. "In labours more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths oft. Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one. Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep; in journeyings often, in perils of waters, in

perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; in weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness." Ah, Paul, thy religion costs thee dear! And dost thou not repent of thy engagement to a Master, whose service—month after month—year after year, is but a succession of privations and trials?—Repent!—"I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ's sake. The love of Christ constraineth us, because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead, and that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but to him that died for them and rose again."

Love—Love is strong as death; many waters cannot quench love, neither can the floods drown it. You do not so strikingly see the amazing vigour of this principle in religion, because Christians are not called in our day to pass through the same scenes as they were in the beginning of the Gospel. Otherwise you would witness it. The principle is the same in every age. It has been exemplified long since the apostolical era. Persecution has formerly reigned and ravaged in our own country. Many suffered and died privately, a spectacle to angels, though not to men. But we have a large Book of Martyrs.—I enter the prisons, and survey the victims. Here I see the old, of whom it is said, "They shall be afraid of that which is high, and fear shall be in the way, and the grasshopper shall be a burden." Here I see females, distinguished by the delicacy and timorousness of their sex. Here I see children, tender and impressible—But all are heroes. What makes them so? They are offered promotion, liberty, and life. But none of these things move them. They are told of tortures; they are led forth, and pointed to the stake—and they embrace it, crying, "None but Christ; none but Christ." How is He glorified here!—We ourselves have frequently seen a little of this principle even in our own day. We have seen the young man resolved to follow his religious convictions though mocked of his neighbours, lampooned by his companions, and threatened by his superiors. We have seen the servant resigning her place: we have seen the workman foregoing his labour and seeking employment, rather than give up an apprehended duty. We have seen the daughter, regardless of entreaties and tears—even a mother's entreaties and tears—the most trying and terrible of all persecutions to an ingenuous and filial mind—rather than renounce the communion of saints, and turn her back on the "glorious Gospel of the blessed God." The disposition which carries persons so far, would, if events required it, carry them further; carry them to any length. They have the spirit of martyrs, and says Christ, I am glorified in them.

V. He is glorified IN THEIR PROFESSION OF HIS NAME.

If it were only necessary to BE a Christian, there never would have been a martyr—he could have hid his religion in his heart. Daniel might have prayed without the place and the posture he chose; and have escaped the lions' den. But if we examine the Scripture, we shall find that an obligation lies upon us not only to BE Christians, but to APPEAR such; not only to believe with the heart, but to confess with the tongue; not only to hold fast the reality, but the profession of our faith without wavering. It is asked, "Who will rise up for me against the evil doers? Who will stand up for me against the workers of iniquity?" It is said, "They that are in darkness shall shew themselves. They are enlightened for this very purpose: "Arise, shine, for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee." A Christian is compared to a candle; and our Saviour tells us, "a man does not light a candle to put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick, that it may give light to all that are in the house;" and adds, "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven."—So little countenance does the Scripture give to the practice of those who renounce business, detach themselves from the community, run into the cells of solitude, and bury their religion alive.

A profession of godliness not only requires that you should live in civil society, but also that you should join yourselves to some body of Christians, according to the order of the Gospel. If all were likeminded with some, there would be no such thing as a CHURCH-STATE any where to be maintained. They never became members of a society. They live unconnectedly. Excuse the roughness of the comparison—they may be considered as a kind of gipsies in religion.—They have no spiritual home—They wander from place to place—Pilfering as they go—Eluding all parochial offices—Declining all the king's taxes—And never contributing to the support of any of the advantages they enjoy.—Whereas Christians are called "fellow citizens with the saints." They belong to a holy state of laws and immunities. They join in communion as to the privileges of religion; in co-operation as to its duties; in sympathy as to its conditions. To vary the image—as the pupils of Christ, they enter his school; as the soldiers of Christ, they enter his army. Stragglers can do little—they are liable to be cut off. It is not the will of the Commander-in-Chief that we should fight alone—he calls us to be embodied; and when we are enrolled and stationed—it is not his pleasure that we

should run from one corps to another, according to our humour, but abide with God in our own rank and place.

This profession also includes our bearing, as we have opportunity, a verbal testimony in favour of religion. "Ye are my witnesses," says God: and woe to us—for we are subpœnaed—if, when we are called upon to depose, we are either absent or silent. Some persons are godly with the godly, but temporize in the presence of the wicked and the worldly. When they hear the truth of Christ denied, his ways misrepresented, his people vilified, they sit "as men in whose mouth there is no reproof." Is this to act the part of a good subject, or of a traitor? "He that is not for me is against me, and he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad." If you are ashamed of the Redeemer's interest, abandon it at once: but if you believe it to be, what it really is, infinitely important and excellent, never shrink from an avowal of it in whatever circumstances or company you are found.

We know that wisdom is profitable to direct. Every thing is beautiful in its season. A word fitly spoken how good is it! But we are often more in danger of erring on the side of caution and prudence than on the side of forwardness and zeal; and to avoid rashness, many go and shelter themselves under the chilling influence of fear and shame.

There is one case in which it is hardly possible to err. It is when you are invited by people to places, and parties, and practices, which your principles lead you to condemn. When this occurs, you have an opportunity, FURNISHED BY THEMSELVES, of stating the grounds of your conduct, and the reasons of your refusal. They cannot surely be offended at the delivery of your creed, when they themselves call for your sentiments. But, alas! there are many who, instead of seizing such fine opportunities to TESTIFY, are not only speechless, but—even yield and conform. They are "overcome of evil" instead of "overcoming evil with good."

VI. He is glorified in them BY THEIR EXERTIONS TO PROMOTE HIS CAUSE.

The cause of Christ is very extensive. It takes in every thing that is true and righteous, and good and noble, in the whole universe. But we particularly refer to the cause of pure and undefiled religion. This is advanced by establishing schools, building places of worship, the diffusing of the Scriptures, the sending forth of missionaries, the supporting of ministers; by instructing the ignorant and reclaiming the vicious; teaching transgressors his ways, and converting sinners unto God.

In doing all this, Christ is glorified. He condescends to consider you as workers together with HIM. He gives you his own names: and what he is called efficiently, you are allowed to be called instrumentally. "Brethren," says the apostle James, "if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him; let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins. What! Can you CONVERT? Can you SAVE? Can you PARDON?—It can intend only that you may be the means of doing it. But even this is an infinite honour conferred upon you; and the inspired writer knowing the disposition of Christians, makes the work its own reward. And if there was only a probability; if there was only a possibility of success but in one instance, it ought to be enough—and if we were in a proper state of mind, it would be enough—to lead us to call into action all resources, and to exert all our influences through life to attain it!

> "Pleasure and praise run through God's host,
> "To see a sinner turn:
> "Thou, Satan, hast a captive lost,
> "And Christ a subject born."

And CAN you do nothing to glorify the Redeemer! Are you a parent? Cannot you recommend him to your children? Are you a master! Cannot you preach him to your servants? Are you the head of a family! Cannot you say, with Joshua, "As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord!" Are you a neighbour? Cannot you invite your acquaintances to come and hear the word of life! Are you a tradesman? Cannot you fulfil the prophecy; "Her merchandize and her hire shall be holiness to the Lord; it shall not be treasured nor laid up; for her merchandize shall be for them that dwell before the Lord, to eat sufficiently, and for durable clothing." Are you rich? Cannot you "honour the Lord with your substance and with the first-fruits of your increase?" Indeed there is nothing by which you may be so useful in the cause of Christ as property, since it enables you to employ every kind of instrumentality.

Every one, therefore, may do something; and all may do much more than fear or sloth will allow them to imagine. This being admitted, it is hoped that no one will suffer his exertions to be chilled by the misapplication of an acknowledged truth. "The Lord has promised to carry on his own cause. He is able to do it: and he will do it"—He will—But he works by means; these means display his wisdom as well as his power; and those who love his Name will desire to become instruments in his hand.

It is needless to remark how forcibly this subject bears upon the Union which you have so nobly established and maintained; and the success of which, if it has not been answerable to your wishes, has been sufficient to encourage your hopes and reward your exertions.

Temporal beneficence is not to be undervalued. While we are in this vale of tears we shall be perpetually called to the exercise of it. Who is not ready to bless the man who feeds the hungry, and clothes the naked, and heals the sick?

But, after all, charity is to be estimated by the capacity of its subject, and the grandeur and the duration of its object.

No zeal therefore can equal that which regards the salvation of the soul. Men are perishing for lack of knowledge. The Gospel is the only remedy. There is no alternative between our belief of the truth of the Gospel and the importance of it; between our belief of its importance and our owning an obligation to receive it ourselves and extend it to others.

How consistently therefore, my UNITED BRETHREN, are you engaged while attempting to diffuse it! And this is your aim—your only aim. Your object is not to make proselytes, but converts. What bigots magnify, you overlook. While you hold your convictions upon subordinate subjects, your conduct asks, "What is the chaff to the wheat?" You consider every thing as trifling, compared with the everlasting salvation of the souls of men. You practically acknowledge that the "kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost:" that "in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature."

—"And as many as walk by this rule, peace be on them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God." May your zeal provoke numbers more; and still discovering the same spirit, and minding the same thing, may you at last obtain the approving sentence, THOU HAST LABOURED AND HAST NOT FAINTED. Let me therefore conclude by observing—

First, That Christians ought not to think meanly of themselves. This remark is liable to abuse, and needs explanation. It does not stand opposed to humbleness of mind, but to thoughtlessness and levity. There is a personal self-valuation which is censurable; but there is a relative self-valuation that is not only allowable but commendable. For instance. A mother ought not to feel an indifference to herself: she ought to know that her life is of importance to her little rising charge. For who can fill her place? Who can feel for an infant like her who bore it?—And this consciousness, instead of inflaming her pride, will be a source of gratitude, self-preservation, and duty. A minister may be humble and heavenly-minded, and long to depart to be with Christ, which is far better; but when he looks around upon his people, he may feel that his labours are desirable, and say, To abide in the flesh is more needful for you. But there is no relation so momentous as that which subsists between Christ and Christians. And if HE be disgraced or glorified in US—Oh! how we ought to feel the value of our character, the sacredness of our condition, the awfulness of our destination, the necessity of self-attention, of vigilance, and of prayer!

Secondly. If He is glorified in us, let us be his servants, attending continually upon this very thing. Let it be the grand and pleasing business of our lives. O my dear brethren in the ministry, and my Christian friends, let us mourn over the little honour we have brought to our Lord and Saviour. Let his fame be dear to our hearts. Let us not be satisfied with the thought that we have not disgraced him—though this is a mercy—but let us be concerned to honour him—to honour him in all our words and works, in our conversation and conduct, in our bodies and spirits.

Need I say how much He deserves it? You know what he is. You know what he has done. You know what he is doing. You know his promises. You know his sufferings. See him, who was rich, for your sakes becoming poor. See him a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. See him in the manger; in the garden; on the cross.

> "See, from his head, his hands, his feet,
> "Sorrow and love flow mingled down;
> "Did e'er such love and sorrow meet,
> "Or thorns compose so rich a crown?
> —"Were the whole realm of nature mine,
> "That were a present far too small;
> "Love so amazing, so divine,
> "Demands my soul, my life, my all."

Thirdly. If Christ is glorified in his people here, how will he be glorified in them hereafter! In the vastness of their number; in the completeness of their deliverance; in the grandeur of their elevation; in the beauty of their residence; in the eternity of their joys—"Then shall he come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe, in that day."

Fourthly. Let the wicked remember that Christ will be glorified in them. He will display his wisdom and power in making them instruments to accomplish his providential purposes; in turning their designs and actions from their natural currents into secret channels prepared to receive them, and in which they will flow into the fulness of him that filleth all in all. The wrath of man shall praise him, and the remainder of wrath will he restrain. Nebuchadnezzar is called his servant as well as Moses.

He will glorify his truth and his righteousness in punishing them.

Either in a way of mercy or in a way of justice, he has sworn by himself, the word is gone out of his mouth, that to him every knee shall bow and every tongue confess.

"Acquaint now thyself with him, and be at peace; thereby good shall come unto thee. Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in him." Amen.

SERMON XXVI.*

THE VALUE OF LIFE.

A SERMON DELIVERED MAY 8TH, 1803, BEFORE THE CORRESPONDING BOARD IN LONDON OF THE SOCIETY IN SCOTLAND (INCORPORATED BY ROYAL CHARTER) FOR THE PROPAGATION OF CHRISTIAN KNOWLEDGE IN THE HIGHLANDS AND ISLANDS.

Skin for skin, yea, all that a man hath will he give for his life.—Job ii. 4.

—And what is Life? "A vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away"—"a flower of the field"—"a flood"—"a sleep"—"a dream"—"a tale"—"nothing"—"surely, every man, at his best estate, is altogether vanity."

What is Life? Toil and care—perplexity and embarrassment—a succession of sighs and tears, of regrets and disgusts—a theatre of tragedies—a hospital of diseases—a wilderness of thorns and briers—"a dry and thirsty land where no water is." "Man, that is born of a woman, is of few days and full of trouble." Such is the estimate of Human Life! It is equally distinguished by brevity and calamity. But, my brethren, the one serves to qualify and relieve the other; and since our days are so evil, it is well they are so few—

—"They'll waft us sooner o'er
"This life's tempestuous sea
"Soon shall we reach the peaceful shore
"Of bless'd eternity."

"Wherefore is light given to a man that is in misery, and life unto the bitter in soul? Who long for death, and it cometh not, and dig for it more than for hid treasure? who rejoice exceedingly and are glad when they can find the grave! There the wicked cease from troubling, and there the weary are at rest. There the prisoners rest together; they hear not the voice of the oppressors; the small and great are there, and the servant is free from his master." What man is he who would immortalize evil, and extend a life, wisely and kindly reduced to a span, to ages—

—"To ages in a world of pain,
"To ages where he goes,
"Gall'd by affliction's heavy chain,
"And hopeless of repose?
"Whence has this world its magic pow'r?
"Why deem we death a foe?
"Recoil from weary life's best hour,
"And court a longer woe?"

Nevertheless life has always been considered the most valuable treasure, the most enviable prize. The love of it is unquestionably the most vigorous principle in our nature. It is interwoven with our very frame. We feel it before we can appreciate the worth of the possession, or estimate the evil of the loss. As we grow up, to this supreme passion every other inclination pays homage. Age does not diminish it: misery does not extinguish it: no sacrifice is too dear to purchase the continuance of it. Esther thinks nothing of the horrors of slavery compared with death: "Let my life be given me at my petition, and my people's at my request; for we are sold, I and my people, to be slain and to perish: but if we had been sold for bond-men and bond-women, I had held my tongue." No sooner had Samuel said, "To-morrow shalt thou and thy sons be with me," than Saul "fell straightway all along on the earth, and was sore afraid, and there was no strength in him." The king of Syria sends messengers to the king of Israel with ropes on their necks; and this is their supplication—"Thy servant Benhadad saith, I pray thee, let me live." To preserve life, Esau sells his birthright.—"Skin for skin, yea, all that a man hath will he give for his life."

My brethren, this adherence to life we have undertaken to justify; and we are going to prove, that there is nothing in it unworthy of the philosopher or the Christian, the man of reason or the man of faith. But in order to this, it will be necessary to give you proper views of life, that we may purify and ennoble the principle of you attachment; and lead you in future to love life, not from a blind animal impulse, but from rational and religious conviction. Our plan will consist of two parts.

In the first, we shall endeavour to establish THE IMPORTANCE OF HUMAN LIFE.

In the second, we shall explain THE USE TO WHICH THE BELIEF OF IT SHOULD BE APPLIED.

These reflections are completely in unison with the call of Providence which has assembled us together; and will, we hope, fully prepare your minds for an attention to a case which we shall humbly but earnestly recommend to your well-known liberality.

I. In proof of the IMPORTANCE of human life, let us first appeal to AUTHORITY. Hear Solomon. "To him that is joined to all the living there is hope; for even a living dog is better than a dead lion." What says David? "Let my soul live, and it shall praise thee. O spare me a little, that I may recover strength before I go hence and be no more. Return, O Lord, deliver my soul: O save me, for thy mercies' sake. For in death there is no remembrance of thee: in the grave who shall give thee thanks?" How does God threaten Eli? "There shall not be an old man in his house." How does He encourage Baruch? "Behold, I will bring evil upon all flesh; but thy life will I give unto thee for a prey, in all places whither thou goest." He

* *Note:—London, May* 18, 1803. At the Annual General Meeting of the Corresponding Board in London of the Society in Scotland for Propagating Christian Knowledge in the Highlands and Islands; His Grace the Duke of Atholl in the Chair; *Resolved unanimously*, That the Thanks of this Board be given to the Rev. William Jay, for his Sermon preached before them, on the 8th instant, at Surry Chapel; and that he be requested to permit the same to be printed, for the use of the Society. THOMAS RUTLEDGE, *Secretary*, pro tempore.

speaks of it as a peculiar privilege, and proposes it as a motive to obedience: "For by me thy days shall be multiplied, and the years of thy life shall be increased." Lest we should suppose that no regard is paid to this consideration under the Gospel, the apostle Paul values a duty because of this recommendation: "Honour thy father and thy mother; which is the first commandment with promise; that it may be well with thee, and that thou mayest live long on the earth." To which we may add, that the apostle Peter makes no scruple to borrow similar language from the Psalms: "What man is he that desireth life and loveth many days, that he may see good? Keep thy tongue from evil, and thy lips from speaking guile. Depart from evil, and do good; seek peace and pursue it. For the eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous, and his ears are open unto their cry. The face of the Lord is against them that do evil, to cut off the remembrance of them from the earth."

Let us, secondly, contemplate human life as THE WORK OF GOD. Why do you value that picture? It is Raphael's. Why deplore the destruction of that building? The nobleness of the structure, the years consumed in the progress, the hands employed in the execution? Why preserve that instrument? It is singular and curious in the contrivance; it is capable of diversified application and use; it is irreparable when destroyed. "Marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty!" But in this lower world the chief is thy creature Man. "Thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honour. Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands; thou hast put all things under his feet." And all is under the influence of his power or his skill. See the animal tribes. He checks them, subdues them to his own purposes, converts them to his own advantage. See the material world. This is under his control, and asks the culture of his hand. Where he never treads, nature is barren, and waste, and wild; but when he comes, meadows are well watered, the little hills rejoice on every side, the valleys also are covered over with corn, the wilderness and the solitary place are made glad for him, and the desert rejoices and blossoms as the rose.

Every thing justifies the supremacy he possesses. His very form is peculiar. What majesty is there in his countenance! What expression in his features! What penetration, what eloquence, in his looks! Material bodies are governed by the laws of mechanism, and animal by those of instinct—but he, possessed of greater liberty, takes a more extensive range, and is capable of a thousand varieties of operation. Beasts and birds are no wiser now than they were before the Flood. In a few weeks or months they reach all the perfection of which they are susceptible—but we never know what man may be; his possibility of improvement is endless. He steps forth from nothing, and develops successively new powers as he proceeds: when he ceases to increase in stature he continues to grow in wisdom, and never seems to approach the manhood of mind. He is wearied; he reclines his head on the lap of insensibility, and sleep seals up all his senses: you touch him, and he springs up, and crosses the boundless ocean—numbers the stars—calculates to a second the position and appearances of the heavenly bodies—looks backward and sees what was done six thousand years ago—plunges into futurity, and views the sun turned into darkness and the moon into blood—surveys himself, and finds an infinity of observations in his memory and of ideas in his imagination, and of purposes in his mind—an intellectual kingdom all his own.

And whence is all this? He is fearfully and wonderfully made. There is a spirit in man, and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth him understanding. In his mysterious composition intelligence is blended with clay: he is in alliance with worms, and a partaker of the Divine nature. He is capable of knowing, and serving, and enjoying his Creator; he has reason and conscience; he is susceptible of vice and virtue, of morality and religion. This gives him his peculiarity and pre-eminence: this raises him above the beasts that perish; this is the foundation of the sacred fence which guards our life: "Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed; for in the image of God made he man."

This brings us to a third view of the importance of human life—It has an intimate, unavoidable, inseparable CONNEXION WITH ANOTHER WORLD, AND AFFORDS US THE ONLY OPPORTUNITY OF ACQUIRING GOOD. If we confine all our attention to the present momentary state of man, he will appear a perplexing trifle. He is referred to no end equal to his character; no result vindicates the expense of the materials employed; he has powers and capacities far above his situation; he has wants and wishes, which nothing within his reach can relieve and satisfy. If he possess great privileges, the more pitiable is his condition; the more has he to lose; the more lamentable is his fall—he falls like a king, and we feel the more, even for the grandeur of which he is despoiled. He is great in vain. He assumes consequence, raises expectation, and rots!—and as we hide his shame among putrefaction and corruption, we look up, and say, "Lord, wherefore hast thou made all men in vain?"

But as soon as he is seen in connection with another state of being, he is rescued at once from perplexity and insignificance. As soon as we seize this point of vision, all is in-

telligible; his faculties and his desires are explained; nothing is disproportionate, nothing is useless, nothing is mean. As soon as we perceive that the present is only introductory to the future, and draws after it endless consequences, all is momentous; all is tremendously grand! Here you may feel greatness without danger of pride. Here you are called upon to reverence yourselves. Immortality,—what a prerogative! Eternity,—what a destiny! A preparation for it,—what a calling! What resolution should it inspire! What energy should it infuse! What caution, what vigilance should it produce!

The importance of a thing is not to be judged of by the magnitude of its appearance, or the shortness of its continuance—but by the grandeur, and variety, and permanency of its effects. Why is a foundation so important! It is low and hidden—but it sustains the whole fabric, and its weakness or strength determines the danger or solidity of the building. Why is spring so important? Its loveliness is transitory and fading—but the glory of summer, the plenty of autumn, the resources of winter, depend upon it. Why is youth so important? The season is soon over—but its influences are durable, and give a character to our remaining years. A single day has opened a source of joy or of sorrow, which has continued its streams through life. In one hour a man has incurred a disgrace, which time could never wipe off. But nothing can equal the importance of the present life, as a state of probation, according to which our future and unchangeable happiness or misery will be decided. For, upon this principle, none of your actions can be indifferent. They are filling the books which will be opened to judge you. They are regulating the sentence by which you are to be absolved or condemned. You are living as saints or sinners for a million of ages hence. And can you be too attentive, too accurate, when you are thinking, speaking, enjoying, suffering, living—for eternity! In other cases, you look forward and weigh the result of things. You are determined to shun or pursue them, not by their present aspects, but by their future effects; you inquire what influence they will have upon your property, your health, your reputation, your family. But these consequences are always temporal, and sometimes reversible—while here they are everlasting and unalterable.

I beseech you, my dear hearers, to reflect upon this, and to consider, that as is your way, such will be your end. Never forget the language of the apostle, "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap: he that soweth to the flesh, shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit, shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting. Observe this image. It shews you that your present conduct and your future state have the same relation to each other, as seed-time and harvest. In nature, no one sows one kind of grain, and looks for another; he knows that every seed rises with its own body. But, alas! how many are there chargeable with this folly in religion! For what are your pursuits in this world, that you should suppose them likely to be crowned with glory, honour, and immortality, in another! What resemblance, what suitableness, what relation is there between them? A Christian hopes to enjoy God hereafter, and he is seeking him here. The song which he wishes to sing in heaven, he is learning upon earth. He is advancing to a state of unmixed friendship—and he is dwelling in love; to a state of union and harmony among good men of every name—and he is rising above these differences, and calling them brethren; to a state where distinctions which are now necessary will be done away—And he is valuing men, not according to their wealth, but their character. Now here we see earnests, tendencies, beginnings—This is the dawn breaking into day, the child bespeaking the man, the grain containing the principles and pledges of the whole crop.

The importance of an opportunity is to be determined by the greatness of the prize which is to be secured or lost. If there be a season for obtaining the salvation of the soul, it will be as superior to every other opportunity as the salvation of the soul surpasses every secular claim. Such is life. "Now is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation." The Gospel is a sovereign remedy; it reveals and offers blessings answerable to all our wants—but they are attainable only in life. Are you guilty? There is forgiveness and reconciliation—But "agree with thine adversary quickly, whilst thou art in the way with him; lest at any time the adversary deliver thee to the judge, and the judge deliver thee to the officer, and thou be cast into prison: verily I say unto thee, thou shalt by no means come out thence till thou hast paid the uttermost farthing." Are you needy? The Saviour of sinners has enough and to spare—but "seek ye the Lord while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near."—"Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able. When once the master of the house hath risen up, and hath shut to the door, and ye begin to stand without, and knock at the door, saying, Lord, Lord, open unto us; he shall answer and say unto you, I know you not whence you are."—"He that is unjust, let him be unjust still; and he that is filthy, let him be filthy still; and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still; and he that is holy, let him be holy still."

Let us take a fourth view of the importance of human life, by considering it in RELATION TO OUR FELLOW-CREATURES AND AS AFFORDING

US THE ONLY OPPORTUNITY OF DOING GOOD. The means of the temporal and spiritual welfare of mankind are not poured down immediately from heaven. God divides the honour with us. He gives, and we convey: he is the source, and we are the medium. It is by human instrumentality that he maintains the cause of the Gospel, speaks comfort to the afflicted, gives bread to the hungry and knowledge to the ignorant. This renders our situation highly interesting.

Some are indeed of more importance in society than others. How much is bound up in the lives of some individuals! Remove that husband, and two tender relations commence: the WIDOW descends from the seat of ease to the toil of labour: the FATHERLESS lose the caresses of the neighbourhood—feel the language of austerity—are dispersed abroad—oppressed by injustice—seduced by error and vice. Remove that minister, and the congregation vanishes, the church is dissolved. When Josiah died, a nation mourned. Individual influence is wonderful. But no one is wholly useless; at least no one ought to be so. The man condemned in the parable was the possessor of one talent only. There is wisdom in the selection of this circumstance. Had the man with two or with five talents been punished, some of you would have escaped—"Well, I never filled such an office; I never owned such abilities; I never commanded such property." But since the example is taken from common life, who can be safe, if found unprofitable? Who can be excused for not doing a little, because he is incapable of doing much? You need not be an extraordinary character in order to be useful. There are opportunities of doing good in every calling of life: there is no condition in which a human being can be placed, which allows him no scope for moral agency: goodness is infinitely diversified in its exercise. We are always in view of some witnesses: some dependents are always leaning upon us. Some, when they die, are missed more than others; but who is not missed at all?—"Then Peter arose and went with them. When he was come, they brought him into an upper chamber: and all the widows stood by him, weeping, and shewing the coats and garments which Dorcas made while she was with them." You may contribute materially to the comfort of a fellow-creature; be the means of his thanksgivings to God; gain his prayers while you are living, and his tears when you are dead; and draw down many a blessing upon your memory and your offspring—by a small pittance of weekly aid. You may give a child understanding, improve his condition through life, and lay open to his view the unsearchable riches of the Scripture—by teaching him to read. By impressing a person with religion, you are profitable unto all things, helping him to the promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come—And this may be done by seasonable admonition, or by the silent eloquence of a holy example.

But remember that all your usefulness attaches only to life. Here alone you can serve your generation according to the will of God, by promoting the wisdom, the virtue, and the happiness of your fellow-creatures. This is the unspeakable advantage of your present state—this is a privilege which heaven does not afford. Yes, my brethren, there are various kinds of influence and of honour, which you must now acquire, or you will never possess.

Would you exercise patience? This is your only opportunity. In heaven there are no trials. There you cannot be seen composed under affliction; there you cannot be heard to say, "It is the Lord, let him do what seemeth him good."

Would you exercise self-denial? This is your only opportunity. In heaven there are no temptations to resist, no corrupt inclinations to mortify, no sensual appetites to control.

Would you exercise Christian courage? This is your only opportunity. Here alone can you be a good soldier of Jesus Christ; profess truth in the face of opposition; and suffer persecution rather than sacrifice conscience.

Would you exercise Christian candour and forbearance? This is your only opportunity. Here alone you can prove whether you can love those who differ from you in opinion; whether you can bear with the mistakes and infirmities of your brethren; whether you can pass by a transgression; whether you can do good to them that hate you.

Would you exercise beneficence—that beneficence which gives you such a resemblance to the Saviour, and which the Judge will so honourably mention in the great day? This is your only opportunity. The poor will not be always with you. Here alone you can relieve the needy, sympathize with the miserable, refresh the bowels of the saints, visit the fatherless and the widows in their affliction. Here alone you can become Howards and Thorntons. There are no almoners to employ, no prisons to explore, in the world above. Had these illustrious names passed through life like too many even among Christians; they could never have obtained the renown which will now follow them through eternity.

Would you discover zeal in the cause of your Lord and Master? This is your only opportunity. Here alone you can recommend a Saviour, and tell of his love to sinners; here alone you can "teach transgressors his ways," and "save a soul from death." If therefore you wish to do good; begin—employ this influence; secure this hour—suffer this opportunity to elapse, and regret is vain; your loss is irrecoverable.

II. Such is the importance of human life

—if we appeal to the testimony of Scripture —if we consider it as the workmanship of God—if we view it in relation to eternity —and in connexion with our fellow-creatures; as the only season of getting good and doing good. And is this a curious speculation! Nothing is more instructive and edifying. Let us specify some of those useful inferences which flow from the belief of it.

First. If life be so valuable, we should DEPLORE THE DESTRUCTION OF IT. When an earthquake swallows up a city; when a vessel sinks and buries eight hundred souls in one watery grave; when a house is destroyed, and several individuals are consumed in the flames; when an individual is murdered in our neighbourhood—we are impressed with the relation—but we think less of the ravages of war, and therefore do not grieve as we ought over the unhappy tendencies there are in nations to wage it. But what makes such desolations in the earth as this evil! We pass by the ruins of buildings, and gardens, and fields—we overlook the sufferings of the brute creation, especially of the generous horse—and think only of men—of the numbers who are dismembered and made useless—of the numbers killed immediately in action—of the numbers which perish of their wounds, and by exposure, disease, privations, hardships. War has sometimes occasioned famine, and a famine has been followed with pestilence. There is no way to affect the mind properly with this subject, but by thinking of the value of Human Life. But is it possible to estimate a single life; to consider the difficulty and expense of rearing it; to think how variously it is connected with others; to how many it is either dear or needful; to remember what it is to the individual himself, his only hour—and not enter into the feelings of the prophet, "My bowels, my bowels! I am pained at my very heart: my heart maketh a noise in me. I cannot hold my peace, because thou hast heard, O my soul, the sound of the trumpet, the alarm of war." Who does not tremble; who does not weep; and who does not pray for the period, "when He shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people: and they shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more." "They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain; FOR the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the seas." For the prevailing influence of Christianity can alone accomplish this desirable purpose —not visionary schemes of philosophy, or new theories and modifications of civil policy, under which the depraved passions of human nature remain the same, and from which come wars and fightings among us.

Secondly. If human life be so precious, you should not EXPOSE IT TO INJURY AND HAZARD. I know that there is no cure for mortality—but a physician of no common reputation has told us, that not one in a thousand dies a natural death: and a higher authority has declared, that the wicked shall not live out half their days. In many ways persons may be chargeable with suicide besides swallowing poison, acting the madman in a duel, or playing the fool in a balloon. Life may be taken away slowly as well as suddenly, by negligence as well as by violence. What think you of the man who indulges himself in the excesses of intemperance, which breed and nourish all manner of diseases? What think you of the man who harbours evil passions, and suffers anger to burn him, envy to gnaw him, anxiety to corrode him? What think you of the man who by pursuing too much business oppresses nature, injures his faculties, deprives himself of rest and relaxation, and ease?—He forgets that "the life is more than meat, and the body than raiment." What think you of those who, to amass money, will deny themselves the conveniences and necessaries of life? What think you of those martyrs of vanity, who to appear in the fashion will avail themselves of modes of apparel, I will not say incompatible with decency, but hazardous to health? What think you of those who carelessly or presumptuously disregard the beginnings of disorder, and suffer that which might be easily checked at first, to become inveterate and fatal? "A little cold," says an original writer, "is a little death; a little more chills us to clay, and fits us for the damps of the grave." What think you of those who lie long and late in bed; relaxing the fibres, unstringing the nerves, evaporating the animal spirits till they start from their own shadow? We would not have you finical and delicate—But a proper regard to health is a duty enforced by the most awful considerations.

Thirdly. If life be so worthy of our regard, we should be THANKFUL FOR THE CONTINUANCE OF IT. And where is the person who is not called to adore the Preserver of men? To how many accidents are we exposed! How many seeds of corruption are lodged in our bodies, which ripened by a change in the air may prove malignant, and bring forth fruit unto death! How delicate is the human frame! We are crushed before the moth. How exquisitely fine, and how easily destroyed is the system of the brain, upon which the exercise of reason depends! How soon may the eye be injured, through which so much of our pleasure passes!

> "Our life contains a thousand springs,
> "And dies if one be gone;
> "Strange that a harp of thousand strings
> "Should keep in tune so long!"

And has thine? Have thy limbs, thy senses, thy faculties been secured? Have you seen

many who were younger, and stronger, and more likely to live than yourselves, cut off? Have some of you, when led down to the mouth of the grave yourselves, been recalled?—Say, Lord! for what purpose am I spared? Shall it be to fill up the measure of my iniquities; or by patient continuance in well-doing to seek for glory, honour, and immortality? "The living, the living, he shall praise thee, as I do this day: the father to the children shall make known thy truth."

Fourthly. If life be of so much consequence, Christians, however well assured of heaven, SHOULD NOT BE IMPATIENT FOR DEATH. Elijah and Jonah prayed to have their lives taken from them; supposing it was better for them to die than to live—but they were both blamed for it. "For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself; for whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore or die, we are the Lord's." "All the days of" our "appointed time we must wait till" our "change comes." We are enlisted into the service of Divine Providence, and if we attempt to withdraw before we are honourably discharged, we are no better than deserters. The best frame you can be in, is to be ready to go, but willing to stay if the Lord has any work for you to do, any trials for you to bear. And instead of complaining, you should acquiesce in the will of God, who knows what is best for you, and be even thankful that by prolonging your continuance here, he gives additional opportunities to exercise your grace, to extend your usefulness, and to add fresh jewels to your crown.

Fifthly. If life be so momentous, WE MAY CONGRATULATE THE PIOUS YOUTH.—He loses little of this blessing; he early begins to use the talent: while others sleep he is awake, and has the advantage in the way everlasting, of time and vigour to advance from strength to strength and from glory to glory. Should he die before age has snowed upon his head, he will not have lived in vain; for the estimate of life is to be taken from action, and not from years. Should his days be prolonged, his hoary head will be a crown of glory, because it will be found in the way of righteousness; and he will come to the grave like a shock of corn fully ripe in his season.—But, oh! how dismal is the state of an old sinner! He looks back, and sees only barrenness or crimes; he is going to resign into the hands of his Creator and his Judge a life, every part of which he has neglected, or abused. Instead of laying up treasure in heaven, he has been treasuring up wrath against the day of wrath; and instead of doing good, he has been doing evil; instead of being a blessing, he has proved a curse to mankind;—and instead of being received into everlasting habitations by those he has made his friends, he will enter hell among the execrations of those whose minds he poisoned, and whose manners he depraved.

Finally. If life be so important, LET IT NOT BE A PRICE IN THE HAND OF FOOLS—Learn to improve it.—And here, my brethren, suffer the word of exhortation. Perhaps you may be surprised to hear me dissuade you—from living a DIABOLICAL life. But what does the devil! He "sinneth from the beginning." By sowing the seeds of error, by spreading snares for the heedless, by laying stumbling-blocks for the blind, by introducing misery into families and communities—you resemble him, and are workers together with the enemy of God and man.

Do not live a mere ANIMAL life. If you suppose that life was given you only to make provision for the flesh, only to pursue whatever flatters the senses and appetites; if you suppose that your Creator had no higher aim in making you what you are than the sublime purposes of sleep and digestion—associate with your brethren in the field, and say, as you join them, "Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die."

Do not live a WORLDLY life, or think that the design of God in placing you here is answered by a succession of trifles, ceremonies, and dissipations; by gaining a ribbon, by amassing a fortune, or acquiring an estate.

Do not live an IDLE life. Rouse up all thy powers, call forth all thy diligence. Let life be a school of wisdom, a field of action, a career of usefulness and glory. "Be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience now inherit the promises. Imitate, above all, the example of Him who lived in every action,—who went about doing good. And remember that he came not only that we might have life, but that we might have it more abundantly. From him are to be derived principles and motives and assistances the most influential—His doctrines, his commands, his promises are all enlivening: while the Spirit he gives frees us from every low sentiment, elevates the mind, expands the affections, invigorates every power, and raising the soul above every thing visible and earthly, and recruits it with eternal life. Of thy precious time prostitute NONE, waste NONE. Some who would not think of throwing away life at once, make no scruple to do it piecemeal: they can sacrifice the smaller portions of time without remorse. But never live a WEEK in vain; have something in the close of it for the reviewing eye to fix upon, something for God, for your fellow-creatures, for yourselves. Prize every DAY. Value every HOUR; mark it with something worthy of reflection: if you cannot stop your MOMENTS, send them off laden with all the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ to the glory and praise of God. Live by rule; fix your end, derived in the presence of God from the grand purposes of life; render every thing conducive to it.

Thus you will live like men; thus you will live like Christians; thus you will live like the heirs of immortality; thus you will live "the life of God."

But it becomes you to live thus IMMEDIATELY. "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave whither thou goest." Your season elapsed, can never be recalled. When a few years are come, you will go the way whence you shall not return—No, you will not return to hear calls of repentance and offers of mercy: no, you will not return to employ means, and to improve opportunities of usefulness. Your friend sleeps, and you go and awake him; he dies, and you call him in vain. You go and produce verdure on his grave, but all within is rottenness. The tree despoiled of its honour by winter, spring will re-adorn. "There is hope of a TREE, if it be cut down, that it will sprout again, and that the tender branch thereof will not cease; though the root thereof wax old in the earth, and the stock thereof DIE in the ground, yet through the scent of water it will bud, and bring forth boughs like a plant: but MAN dieth and wasteth away; yea, man giveth up the ghost, and where is he? As the waters fail from the sea, and the flood decayeth and drieth up: so MAN lieth down, and riseth not till the heavens be no more; they shall not awake, nor be raised out of their sleep." And this season is rapidly hastening to a close: you are perpetually reminded of it. Every day you see man going to his long home, and the mourners going about the streets. Your connexions die. "The fathers, where are they? and the prophets, do they live for ever?" Even this Institution, since the annual assembly, has been deprived of the distinguished Secretary of the Corresponding Board*—and I mention this the more freely, as, dying in our neighbourhood, I saw him a few days only before his departure; and the last subject of our conversation was the business in which we are now engaged. Nothing lay nearer his heart than the prosperity of this establishment, and his talents have been often employed in recommending it—And who could recommend like him? But the voice which made you thrill; the imagination which was equally capable of beauty and grandeur; those powers of combination and expansion; those faculties which could so justly discriminate, so distinctly delineate, so richly embellish, so deeply impress—are all silent in the grave! And we are following—"Perhaps this is the last year, the last month, the last week in which I can glorify my Redeemer, and be serviceable to those around me. What then have I done? What am I doing? What can I do? Does my family claim my attention? Do children depend upon me for instruction? Do neighbours require kind offices of relief? Does my country demand my exertions? Can I aid in establishing seminaries, in maintaining the worship of God, in spreading the Gospel?—Hinder me not. I must work the work of Him that sent me while it is day; the night cometh wherein no man can work."

If this be your sentiment and language, I need not be afraid to bring forward a case which in general terms I have already announced, but of which it will be necessary to give you more particular information. It can hardly be expected, however, that in the close of a sermon we should furnish you with a minute statement of things appertaining to a Charity so long established, so comprehensive in its plan, and so successful in its efforts. This is the less needful, as an account is always annexed to the annual sermon.

THE SOCIETY IN SCOTLAND FOR THE PROPAGATION OF CHRISTIAN KNOWLEDGE has struck its influence across the Atlantic, and North America has been blessed with its missionaries, of which the celebrated Brainerd was one. But the principal sphere of its activity are parts of its own country. No situation could have required it more. In the lower parts of Scotland, the poor are generally superior to the peasantry in any other country both as to education and morality. But it was far otherwise with the more northern districts—the Highlands and Islands. There the inhabitants were found in a state of total ignorance, barbarism, and superstition. Their situation was remote—and not easily approached for mountains, rivers, arms of the sea, a stormy ocean. They had no books—and few of them could read. Their language* was unintelligible to the rest of their countrymen. The feudal dominion under which they lived was unfavourable to the increase of knowledge. They were indeed divided into parishes; but some of these were forty and even sixty miles in extent, with only one church and one school. From these the majority of the inhabitants could derive no advantage. The fewness of the Protestant Clergy and the scarcity of Protestant instruction could not expel the mischief of Popery; Popery therefore prevailed.

The Society, formed originally for the reformation of manners, soon turned their eye towards these dreary regions, and determined to employ their influence to teach the ignorant, to civilize the rude, to evangelize the heathen, and to emancipate the superstitious—among those who were not only connected with them as partakers of human nature, but as fellow-citizens and members of the same empire. The way by which they wished to penerate was—by establishing and endowing schools—by employing catechists and mis-

* Rev. Henry Hunter, D. D.

* A dialect of the ancient Celtic.

sionaries—and by distributing the Holy Scriptures. The effect has been answerable to the excellency of the design.—Compare now the inhabitants with the Irish, derived from the same stock, originally speaking the same language, distinguished by the same manners and arms. We have lately seen in the latter the dreadful effects of ignorant and cruel bigotry—while the former have appeared peaceful citizens, loyal subjects, able defenders of their country. Compare their present condition and character with their former habits and circumstances. They were bands of robbers, following the war-hoop of any chieftain, often invading their southern neighbours—and it is not a century ago, since by their irruption they spread alarm even to the very metropolis. Now, good order, decency, industry, comfortable subsistence, and "the influence of a mild and enlightened religion," are everywhere visible; and through any of these parts a person may travel, unarmed and in the night, with perfect safety. Now—it is not pretended that this happy amelioration has been solely accomplished by this institution—but this has from the beginning been the aim, and in no common degree the effect of its operations. The number of those who from the origin of it have been blessed by this noble Charity, both in their temporal and spiritual circumstances, would appear incredible. It has now above three hundred teachers, and nearly sixty thousand persons are daily deriving instruction from it. Though the resources of the institution be great, and every thing be managed with singular œconomy, the expenditure equals the receipts. The Society is even compelled to limit its efforts, and sometimes obliged to refuse petitions. I have an additional circumstance to mention. The Society has undertaken to publish a new edition of the Old Testament in Gaelic. The object is of desirable importance—this language is spoken by more than three hundred thousand of your fellow-subjects—and who would not wish them to have the Word of God in their native tongue—who would not lament that any should be willing to read the Scriptures, and not have the Scriptures to read? At length this great work is completed, and the translation of the whole Bible is furnished to the inhabitants. The expense has been above three thousand pounds. Hence the Society requires EXTRAORDINARY aid, and looks forward this year with higher expectations than usual to the London Collection; and shall they be disappointed?

My brethren, it is a small sacrifice we demand of you. You are not called to wearisome journeys, laborious exertions, self-denying services—the trying part of the work is disinterestedly executed by others.—And with regard to you, we only crave a little of your abundance. I know you have it in the power of your hand.—If you say, claims of this kind are perpetually renewed—remember how much you owe to religion; how much it has saved you in cutting off expensive vices and amusements—and in making you industrious and frugal and liberal—for giving is the way to thriving. Besides, your property was given you for this very purpose, and a time is hastening on when the design and the application of your wealth will be compared together—may you be enabled to give up your account with joy, and not with grief.

But you will not be backward to do good and to communicate. I have a full confidence of success, derived not from the abilities of the speaker, but the dispositions of the hearers. I know many in this large assembly; and I know that they cannot be unmoved at the prospect of usefulness; they cannot be indifferent to the welfare of the rising generation; they cannot be unconcerned for the safety and prosperity of their beloved country; they cannot be insensible to the progress of that Kingdom, which is righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost.—They have tasted that the Lord is gracious themselves, and wish others to partake of the same blessedness. They have been called out of darkness into marvellous light—and are now determined to shew forth the praises of their Deliverer.—"His Name shall endure for ever; his Name shall be continued as long as the sun; and men shall be blessed in him; all nations shall call him blessed. And blessed be his glorious Name for ever; and let the whole earth be filled with his glory; AMEN and AMEN.

THE END.

MISCELLANIES:

COMPRISING

MEMOIRS OF CORNELIUS WINTER—MEMOIRS OF JOHN CLARK —SERMONS—AND AN ESSAY ON MARRIAGE.

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MEMOIRS

OF THE LATE

REV. CORNELIUS WINTER.

TO THE NUMEROUS FRIENDS OF THE REV. CORNELIUS WINTER, IN GENERAL; AND TO JOHN LEE, ESQUIRE, IN PARTICULAR,

As one whose regard for the deceased was only equalled by the regard of the deceased for him: this Narrative is respectfully dedicated by

THE EDITOR.

PREFACE.

BEFORE a work professedly biographical can be righteously justified or condemned, two things should be fairly examined. First—What advantages are derived from the lives of particular individuals? Secondly—What characters are the most proper subjects for delineation?

The former of these questions it is easy to answer. Biography has always been highly extolled. It has frequently been compared with other kinds of composition, and pronounced peculiarly entertaining and instructive. The utility of it has been even ranked above the advantages resulting from *general* history.

Let us attend to this preference, and see whether it be not founded in reason and truth. —The aim of *all* history *should* be to describe and exhibit persons impartially as they are, that goodness may excite admiration, and vice abhorrence. Upon this principle, individual representations are obviously superior to general and aggregate. When the attention is attracted and confined to one particular object, the view is more distinct, and the impression is more forcible. Expansion and division weaken. Multiplicity and variety distract. This may be judged of, says a masterly writer, by the feelings and operations of the mind in the contemplation of other things.—"When from the summit of some lofty mountain, we survey the wide extended landscape; though highly delighted, we feel ourselves bewildered and overwhelmed by the profusion and diversity of beauties which nature spreads around us. But when we enter the detail of nature: when we attend the footsteps of a friend through some favoured, beautiful spot, which the eye and the mind take in at once; feeling ourselves at ease, with undivided, undistracted attention we contemplate the whole, we examine and arrange the parts; the imagination is indeed less expanded, but the heart is more gratified; our pleasure is less violent and tumultuous, but it is more intense, more complete, and continues much longer; what is lost in respect of sublimity, is gained in perspicuity, force, and duration." Again. "It is highly gratifying to find ourselves in the midst of a public assembly of agreeable people of both sexes, and to partake of the general cheerfulness and benevolence. But what are the cheerfulness and benevolence of a public assembly, compared to the endearments of friendship, and the meltings of love? To enjoy these, we must retire from the crowd, and have recourse to the individual. In like manner, whatever satisfaction and improvement may be derived from general histories of mankind, which we would not be thought by any means to depreciate; yet the history of particular persons, if executed with fidelity and skill, while it exercises the judgment less severely, so it fixes down the attention more closely, and makes its way more directly and more forcibly to the heart."

To this quotation, the beauty of which will more than atone for the length, we may add, that biography is the most eagerly read of all kinds of narrative productions, and the most easily applied to the various purposes of life.

But it is less necessary to enlarge upon the advantages of this species of writing, than to ascertain what are the most proper subjects to bring under review.

—They are by no means persons raised to the highest elevations, or distinguished by the most extraordinary achievements. For, not to observe that such characters are rarely remarkable for goodness and worth, it is easy to see, that they fall not within the reach of common imitation—that they exhibit nothing that leads to self-reflection—nothing that occasions moral comparison—nothing to reprove, to stimulate, to encourage in the course *we* pursue: they seem to belong to a state with which we have nothing to do: and therefore, though they excite curiosity, and furnish materials for conversation, they do not govern our manners, or regulate our practice. How few are placed in situations in which they are likely to grow wiser, by the errors of a statesman, or the mistakes of a general! "Life," says Johnson, "derives its comforts or wretchedness from the management of these things, which nothing but their frequency makes considerable, and which can have no place in the relations of those, who never descend below the consultations of senates, and the motions of armies."

"It is not," says the same author, "improper to take advantage of prejudice, and to gain attention by a celebrated name; but the business of the biographer is often to pass slightly over those performances and incidents which promote vulgar greatness, to lead the thoughts into domestic privacies, and to display the minute detail of daily life, where external appendages are cast aside, and men excel each other only by prudence and by virtue. There are many invisible circumstances which, whether we read as inquirers after natural or moral knowledge, are more important than public occurrences. Thus the story of Melancthon affords a striking lecture on the value of time, by informing us that when he had an appointment, he expected not only the hour, but the minute to be fixed, that the day might not run out in the idleness of suspense. And all the plans and enterprises of De Witt, are now of less importance to the world, than the part of his personal character which represents him as careful of health, and negligent of life. In the estimation of uncorrupt reason, what is of most use is of most value. Between falsehood and useless truth there is little difference. As gold which he cannot spend, will make no man rich, so knowledge which he cannot apply, will make no man wise."

Neither are eccentric characters the best suited to instruct and impress. These can be easily made to awaken notice, and therefore their lives are often written and greedily read: but as the former subject *cannot* be imitated, so these *ought not*. Eccentricity is sometimes found connected with genius, but it does not coalesce with true wisdom. Hence men of the first order of intellect have never betrayed it; and hence also men of secondary talents drop it as they grow wiser; and are satisfied to found their consequence on real and solid excellency, not on peculiarity and extravagance. They are content to awaken regard, and obtain applause by the rectitude and gracefulness of their going, rather than to make passengers stare and laugh by leaping over the wall, or tumbling along the road. True greatness is serious: trifling is beneath its dignity. We are more indebted to the regular, sober, constant course of the sun, than to the glare of the comet: the one indeed, occupies our papers, but the other enriches our fields and gardens; we gaze at the strangeness of the one, but we live by the influence of the other.

For the purposes of biography, those lives are the most eligible that are the most imitable; and these are derived from characters that belong to our own community, that are found in the same relations and conditions with ourselves; whose circumstances make us feel for the time the emotions which would be excited by the same good or evil happening to ourselves; whose attainments, while they resulted from the Divine blessing, appear not to have been preternatural, but were made under no greater advantages than our own; whose progress was not less owing to the stroke of the oar, than the favourableness of the wind; whose excellences while they do not discourage us by their perfection, animate us by their degree; whose success teaches us, not how to be great, but how to be good and happy; whose piety is not fluctuating, but steady; not visionary, but producing a beautiful correspondence to all the claims of the stations in which they are placed.

Those lives are worthy of remark that exhibit a sameness of principle in diversified circumstances. For the changing scenes through which a man passes, renders his history at once more interesting and more profitable: they revolve his character, and we behold it successively in every point of light.

A life is deserving of regard that has filled various offices and relations, and has been exemplary in each of them. They that were connected with him, and those who were under his care, will be likely to remember his instructions and example; while he serves as a model for others who are called to move in the same direction with himself.

Our great moralist admires a life in which a man is his own biographer. "Those relations are commonly of most value in which the writer tells his own story. He that recounts the life of another, commonly dwells most upon conspicuous events, lessens the familiarity

of his tale to increase its dignity, shows his favourite at a distance, decorated and magnified like the ancient actors in their tragic dress, and endeavours to hide the man, that he may produce a hero. But if it be true which was said by a French prince, *that no man was a hero to the servants of his chamber;* it is equally true, that every man is yet less a hero to himself. He that is most elevated above the crowd by the importance of his employment, or the reputation of his genius, feels himself affected by fame or business, but as they influence his domestic life. The high and low, as they have the same faculties and the same senses, have no less similitude in their pains and pleasures. The sensations are the same in all, though produced by different occasions. The prince feels the same pain when an invader seizes a province, as the farmer when a thief drives away his cow. Men thus equal in themselves, will appear equal in honest and impartial biography; and those whom fortune or nature place at the greatest distance, may afford instruction to each other.

"The writer of his own life has at least the first qualification of an historian, the knowledge of the truth; and though it may be plausibly objected, that his temptations to disguise it, are equal to his opportunities of knowing it, yet I cannot but think that impartiality may be expected with equal confidence from him that relates the passages of his own life, as from him that delivers the transactions of another. He that sits down calmly and voluntarily to review his life for the admonition of posterity, or to amuse himself, and leaves this account unpublished, may be commonly presumed to tell truth, since falsehood cannot appease his own mind, and fame will not be heard beneath the tomb.

If these considerations are allowed, I am fully justified in having wished to send forth the following account of the Rev. Cornelius Winter. It was principally written by himself. He has moved in a variety of relative situations. His life, though it has not made so much noise in the world as the progress of some others, has been in no small degree diversified and eventful; and the whole has been in a high degree, holy, benevolent, and useful.

It has indeed been supposed, that the delineation of very eminent examples may be injurious to persons of weak and tender minds; and that the sight of superiority so great, will discourage from efforts at imitation. Three things will fully answer such an objection as this. First.—Though persons of inferior attainments ought to be encouraged, they ought not to be flattered. We must not turn the cordials of the Gospel into opiates; nor lull into satisfaction with themselves, those who ought to be roused to advance and excel. Secondly.—It is well to have a good copy, however imperfect the writing may be. A pattern ought to be something above us; something that will remind us of deficiency, and animate us to diligence. Thirdly.—The sources of excellency lie open to us. If the attainments of those we commemorate were self-derived, and we were required to follow them in our own strength, we might indeed feel discouraged at the contemplation. But if their faith, and hope, and love, and usefulness, were the production of God's own Spirit—if the residue of this Spirit is with him—and he has said, "Ask and it shall be given you, seek and ye shall find"—none need despair. By the grace of God they were what they were: and the grace that was sufficient for them is equally so for us. We should therefore be *strong* in the grace that is in Christ Jesus.

But some may imagine we have spoken too highly of the venerable subject of the following pages. And it must be acknowledged that the manner in which works of biography have been frequently executed, has rendered a suspicion of this kind too natural. So often has the writer been the eulogist instead of the historian, that the mind becomes sceptical, and takes it for granted that if fable be not mixed with fact, reality is embellished by description, and magnified by the fondness of admiration. There is also peculiar danger that a biographer will be warped into partiality and exaggeration, if he feels very powerfully the sentiments of esteem and gratitude. I hope my readers will do me the justice to believe—that I sat down to this work under a persuasion of the truth of these remarks, and aware of the danger in which my feelings placed me. I have endeavoured to keep myself under the eye of God—and though I know not whether there has been a wakeful hour since his death, in which I have not thought of the deceased, or that I have written a page concerning him without tears—for tears have been my meat.*—I am confident nothing has been advanced in the representation that equals the original.

Indeed in commendation of this servant of God, this benefactor of man, I am in no hazard of contradiction from those who knew him: for perhaps seldom, if ever, was there such a harmony of sentiment concerning any individual before. "That good man" was the manner in which he was always introduced, and the preface to every thing that was said of him.

The work ought to have been better: and probably would have been, if more time had been allowed by the importunity of friendship; but I have done what I could in a very few

* "When Heaven would set our spirits free,
And earth's enchantment end,
It takes the most effectual means,
And robs us of a friend." YOUNG.

weeks of frequent interruption and indisposition. The toil of examining an immense number of letters received and written by the deceased, and the perplexity of selecting extracts, and inserting them in their proper place, have not been without fatigue. But I have laboured with pleasure, and rejoice in the enterprise, from a persuasion that what I have written from the warmest affection, and the highest regard will at the same time be ratified by a large proportion of the public voice; and that I am doing good to others while I have an opportunity to indulge my own feelings, and to acknowledge the obligations to my dear and honoured friend and benefactor, which I shall never be able to discharge. To him I owe all my respectability in life, and all my opportunities of public usefulness. Though not a child by birth, I have been one by adoption; and close this Preface by a line borrowed from Homer, which our admired Cowper, with some little variation, inscribed on a bust of his Grecian favourite:

"Ως τε πατηρ ω παιδι, και ωποτε, λησομαι αυτε."

Lov'd as his son, in him I early found,
A father, such as I will ne'er forget.

WILLIAM JAY.

Bath, April 1, 1808.

MEMOIRS, &c.

PART I.

HIS OWN ACCOUNT OF HIMSELF.

THE following letters were all sent in the year one thousand seven hundred and ninety-nine. This is the only date they bear. The Editor deemed it proper to omit a few very minute passages into which the writer had dropped, perhaps from his not suspecting, or his not remembering, that they were to meet the public eye. Some who were unacquainted with the deceased may think that more ought to have been suppressed: but they who knew him will readily and gladly indulge him in a little amplitude and particularity, while relating his own story, to one who would naturally feel interested in the detail of the whole.

LETTER I.

MY VERY DEAR FRIEND,—You have taken frequent occasion to testify your disposition to preserve our long established friendship. It commenced by the good providence of God; it has hitherto been preserved inviolate; it has been attended with reciprocal advantages; it has given you the claims of a son, and produced in me the tender sensibility of a parent, never offended, but always made happy by a consistent, uniform, and endearing conduct. I have no secret that I would wish to conceal from you; there is no instance in which I can oblige you, but I am ready to attend to it. You have requested to see my life extended to this period, drawn out by my own hand; and I have only waited for a fair opportunity to gratify you. Use as you please what I communicate. I am too inconsiderable to attract the attention of the public. Every man is a history to himself. I review my own life with humiliation and self-abhorrence for sins, in my younger years, committed against the Lord; but my humiliation is not limited to that period. I would wish it to be, in part, the closing act of my days. I have obtained mercy, and gratitude is highly due to the God of my life. I have been the subject of his providential goodness; hitherto has the Lord helped me. Select friends, as well as yourself, may be entertained by the recital of the divine conduct, and if any may be excited by it under similar circumstances, either in youth or riper years, to trust in the Lord, I shall esteem the end of its being communicated answered.—I am, with more affection than words can express, ever yours, CORNELIUS WINTER.

LETTER II.

MY VERY DEAR FRIEND,—In looking to the rock from whence I was hewn, and to the hole of the pit from whence I was digged, I have an effectual antidote against pride; in the mention of them I feel no mortification.

Gray's-inn-lane, in the parish of St. Andrew, Holborn, was the place of my nativity. I was born the ninth and last child of John and Catherine Winter, on the ninth of October, in the year one thousand seven hundred and forty-two, and was baptized on the sixteenth day of the same month, in the parish church.

I am very unacquainted with the history of my family, but from what I have heard of the place of my father's birth, which was in or near Nottingham, and his being educated a Dissenter, I am inclined to conceive my descent is from Dr. Winter, mentioned in Palmer's Non-conformist's Memorial. However, this can be but conjecture, and would be of little consequence could it be ascertained.

I know my mother was a native of Guildford, in Surry. Her immediate descent was humble. She was the second wife of my father. He was by trade a shoemaker, in very moderate circumstances; he was elected, in the latter part of his life, head porter of Gray's-inn, a situation worth sixty pounds per annum. He died of a consumption when I was nine months old. I remember to have heard it remarked, when I was a child, that on his death bed, he much lamented that he had not felt himself affectionately disposed towards me. But it may be easily accounted for, from my being too young to have any thing attractive, and from the petulance and decay of spirits, not uncommon to persons in that disorder.

My mother survived him seven years, in a declining state, which also terminated in a consumption. She was not wanting in her affection to me; but I was nursed and reared principally by her sister, who was sheltered both by my father, and herself, from one of

the most cruel husbands that ever disgraced human nature; and she had the greatest share of my affection. This foster parent was removed from the family by necessity, previous to my mother's decease. My brother, at the time of my mother's death, about twenty-three years of age, and my sister about seventeen, with myself, were the only survivors of the nine children. My brother, who had served seven years apprenticeship to a watchmaker, soon fell a sacrifice to youthful lusts. I had been encouraged to hope for support from him, but in consequence of his bad conduct, he enlisted in the East India service, and died abroad. My sister designed to exert herself for me, and had she been as prudent as she was capable, might have supported me till the usual period in which lads are apprenticed; but she had many attractions, and fell into ensnaring company. A few years she was the dupe to vice, but afterwards reformed; and I have reason to conclude was effectually awakened and savingly converted by Mr. Romaine's ministry, and died under the influence of divine grace.

After the death of my mother, I was suffered to wander the streets, and spend my time in idleness and childish dissipation. Soon after I was turned of eight years, I was admitted into the charity school of St. Andrew, Holborn, and thought it a high honour conferred upon me. I felt it an affliction to be deprived of schooling, and frequently found time hang heavy till I gained the privilege. When returning from school, I found myself excluded our apartments; I was often in want of food, and at a loss for many hours to know what was become of my sister. By degrees I missed pieces of furniture, and perceived affairs going on seriously bad. My mother had the care of several sets of chambers in Gray's-inn ever since I could remember, which, in conjunction with the business of a laundress, was the means of our subsistence; my sister was very ingenious with her needle and her pen, and conducted the whole business with great credit, during the period wherein my mother lay helpless. Previous to that time, she was her right hand, and was encouraged to go on with the business after her decease; but she had formed a tender connexion which was never consummated; and having been drawn into dissipation, matters became daily embarrassed.

She took occasion one day to inform me the furniture would be sold, that she must go to service, and that I must go to the workhouse. She was not deficient in affection. I dearly loved her, and I hoped the event would turn out for good. I do not recollect finding myself reluctant to my fate. It was a peculiar pleasure to me to be informed I should be continued in the school.

I was introduced into a ward of thirty boys. Many inconveniences it may be supposed I felt,* but with all I can recollect that I was at the same time impressed with a sense of many mercies, and became soon familiarized to this situation.

This part of my history includes about two years. When I look back as far as I can remember, I can recollect many circumstances which are not sufficiently interesting to insert here; one however I cannot omit, namely, the frequent and deep impressions made upon my mind by religion. I have been informed by some who knew me before I knew myself, that it was hardly possible to keep me in the house after Gray's-inn chapel bell struck out, to summon people to the daily prayers at eleven in the morning and five in the evening. I well remember its powerful attraction, and also the first time wherein, after very earnest entreaty, I was intrusted to go by myself to St. Andrew's church. I can recollect the pious frame of my mind, the energy with which I could repeat prayers, and according to my ability read, and heard the Scriptures read. A very serious walk round Gray's-inn, with some of my companions on a sabbath day evening, and our conversation upon the greatness and goodness of God, excited by the serenity of the element, frequently occurs to my mind. I attended funerals till I could repeat the burial service by rote. In the time in which I was denied the privilege of school, I frequently went to St. Andrew's church, at the hour of prayer, and recollect perfectly the first time, that the twenty-first chapter of St. Luke, being read by the minister in

* Of these the author has noticed several instances, such as crowding together a great number of boys into one bed, allowing them insufficient food, disregarding their cleanliness, neglecting their health, &c. These the editor has suppressed above, and would not have remarked them here, but for the sake of lamenting—that the design of charitable institutions should so often be subverted wholly or partially, through the avarice or inattention of hirelings. This might, in some measure at least, be prevented, if proper persons would undertake to inspect them. The editor remembers, when in Dublin, to have met with a gentleman who had retired from business, and lived on a small independence, who devoted himself entirely to this object. He investigated all the benevolent establishments in the city, and having ascertained the design of them, and the advantages the beneficiaries were authorized to expect from them, he published the account to enable any of the inhabitants to judge whether justice was done them; and visited them weekly in rotation himself. How many ways are there of doing good, even where persons have it not in their power to afford pecuniary assistance! How desirable is it to deserve the eulogium pronounced on Mary, "She hath done what she could!"

As to the condition itself in which Mr. W. frankly acknowledges himself to have been found, it must prove very unacceptable and offensive to all those who worship "the god of this world," and can think of nothing worthy attention separable from guineas and ribbons. Were it not for the remoteness of the scene, how much more scandalized must they be when they hear *our* apostles saying, "even to this hour we both hunger and thirst, and are naked and buffeted, and have no certain dwelling place:" and to read of the mother of *our* Saviour, that "She brought forth her first-born son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes and laid him in a manger, because there was no room for him in the inn?"

the desk, made a deep impression upon me. Indeed the Scriptures I am now most conversant with are those I have heard read in the desk, or recited as texts from the pulpit, through a succession of sixteen or eighteen years. I enjoyed going to church on the saints days and on the sabbath days, and, with a few exceptions, which were always accompanied with remorse, devoutly joined in the prayers and psalmody of the church, and of the school. My mind at times has been so elevated that I believe I could have received the summons of death with joy.

I am inclined to think these frames may be attributed to the work of the Spirit of God, which, though early begun, was frequently interrupted by sinful propensities, and practices which, as the result of temptation, I fell into; the recollection of which gives me pain, and constrains me to pray; "O remember not against me former iniquities; remember not the sins of my youth." I frequently feel the most powerful distress for them now, at the age of fifty-seven, and if I could, would make retribution. I must, and blessed be God I may be a debtor to the blood of Jesus. I never did any thing inconsistent with the strict rule of morality without feeling the smart of conscience.

An innocent forgetfulness became the inlet of a sad temptation, in compliance with which I was too successful a practitioner in sin. As the solicitation occurred, I many times laid myself under a curse, that I would commit the sin no more. But nothing short of converting grace could break the snare. One day I fell by the temptation. I had been in high expectation of hearing a favourite preacher on the following Sunday. When the Sunday came, I hesitated much, whether, with so much guilt upon me, I should go to church. I did go, but got sorely wounded by considering the impropriety of the religious act of that day, with my sinful conduct in the course of the week.

I found out a relation who was dying in a consumption. He was the son of the widow of my father's brother. He encouraged me, when I had liberty, to visit him. In death he recommended me to his brother's notice, who had been indebted to my father for putting him apprentice. This was Mr. Winter, water-gilder, in Bunhill-row, of whom I had not any knowledge. I found he had a design to take me from the workhouse. I wish I could represent his design in a pleasing light. He appeared disposed to let me go to the charity-school for the advantage of education, but instantly as he took me, I was dismissed by the trustees. I heard it was to be my fate; but hoped the report was false, especially as the committee-day passed in which the business of the school was attended to, and the scholars were reviewed, without any notice being taken of it. I went as usual, the next morning, at the exact time, for I never was late, nor ever incurred displeasure by an hour's absence unavoidably. After the usual exercise of prayer, the head master surlily came up to me, and demanded if my Sunday's clothes were in their place (they were taken home on the Saturday and returned on the Monday by the law of the school.) On being answered in the affirmative, he told me I must go away, that I was no longer of that school. It is not to be described what I felt. I returned to my new home, broken-hearted. As Mr. Winter permitted me to apply for re-admission, I am inclined to think it was not his design to prevent me the advantage of the schooling, at least for a time. The month was a very gloomy one. On the Sunday I betook myself to the church, longing to be in my seat; like an outcast I placed myself after church, at the school door, and was pierced to the heart by seeing the procession of the scholars, without permission to join them. On the committee-day I presented my petition for re-admission, begged access into the room, kneeled upon my knees, and with crying and tears entreated for God's sake the learning of the school might be granted to me; but nothing was said to me; on the other hand, a haughty clergyman dressed in his full suit of robes, ordered me instantly to be taken out.

I had not been two years in the school; and three severe fits of sickness, the saints days, and Christmas, Easter, and Whitsuntide holidays, made a considerable reduction from that time, and no very great attention was paid to improvement; so that I had merely learned to write when my schooling closed, without being set to put three figures together, or to learn one line in any of the tables.

I now became the errand boy, and was devoted to what employ I was capable of in the workshop, and occasionally in the kitchen, and other domestic services from six in the morning till eight in the evening, or later, as occasion served. This was my situation till I was one and twenty years of age. Mr. Winter was a man of very irritable, severe temper, unhappy in his marriage, and given exceedingly to drinking. Whatever ruffled his temper I was the victim upon whom he vented his rage. By his severity my spirits were soon broken, and I became so enervated that the step of his foot up stairs, and the sight of him commonly threw me into a tremor. Upon the slightest occasion he would beat me unmercifully. He never was at a loss for a weapon: iron was the same as wood; consequences were not regarded. I review the scene and shudder. I sometimes wonder that I have my faculties. To this very time I frequently dream I am with him under his displeasure, and feel uneasiness.

During the period of twelve years, I often thought it were better to die than to live, and in some parts of that time was ready to say, I choose strangling rather than life. Had I, in the former years been a partaker of grace, I should have thought I endured, as seeing him who is invisible; but as this was not the case, I sometimes wonder, on reflection, that I did not elope from him, and submit to any thing rather than such perpetual torture of body and mind. It was a very abject situation; I had nothing to encourage me. Overburdened one day with the severity of my usage, I made an effort to get work, and was determined to disengage myself from my hard task-master. This I could legally have done as he had not bound me to him. He was informed of it and was alarmed. He came up in the shop one morning in an unusual good humour, directed his discourse to me, applauded my work, asked me if I had heard the news of young men not apprenticed being liable to be forced into the king's service, and, as it was the time of war, said he had no method of screening me, but by binding me to him. Perceiving that he was imposing upon me, and suspecting he had a design of an unworthy nature, especially as he kept me back in my improvement, and had till then refused to bind me, I resisted his motion. He then unmasked, flew into a passion, informed me that he had heard I had applied for business, and threatened to demand recompense for my subsistence for the time I had been with him. I was persuaded into submission. The indenture was antedated, and I continued to wear the galling chain for four years longer.

I was not my own guide. I could not help myself without risking difficulties, which might have been equal to those I underwent with him. I doubtless had my faults. Many I recollect, and, under the review of them, am humbled before God; but those he might charge me with, did not merit that indiscreet severity he exercised upon me. I shall in the course of this memoir have occasion to mention him again. I bless God I was not suffered to precipitate myself into ruin, but was enabled patiently to endure; and as I subscribe to his wisdom in permitting events thus to occur, I have to recollect with gratitude his kindness towards me afterwards. He has instructed me and taught me. He has been a father unto me, and shall receive praise from me. I will relieve your attention, and at present subscribe myself, my very dear friend, yours, affectionately, &c.

LETTER III.

My very dear friend,—In the former letter I mentioned that I can recollect my mind being often in a very pious frame; I will here cite a fresh instance. By being brought to Mr. Winter, I became an inhabitant of the parish of St. Luke, Old-street. On Saturday, I frequently anticipated the pleasures of the day ensuing, not merely as a day of leisure, but of devotion; and usually attended St. Luke's church, morning and afternoon, and thought it an additional pleasure to have opportunity to attend a monthly evening lecture at Cripplegate. A charity sermon was of great importance to me, as it afforded me an opportunity to hear a new preacher; and I almost envied the boys the privilege of the charity—judge you how I must feel when a bishop preached. My situation sometimes confined me at home on a Sunday afternoon, when I engaged my attention to the Bible. I remember to have fatigued myself once exceedingly in writing out the first chapter of the second book of Kings. But it stuck by me. O that I had habituated myself more to that employ! I had all this time common and very strong prejudices against the Methodists and Dissenters. When my clothes were disgracefully bad, which was sometimes the case, I absconded from my own church, and occasionally wandered into a meeting-house. I at last got to hear Mr. Whitefield two or three times, and was particularly struck by his appearance and dress. Though at the distance of sixty feet, and the congregation very crowded, I one Sunday evening thought he spoke particularly to me, and the imagination had a powerful effect upon me.

I believe it was the Christmas previous to this, while at a card table I was taking some undue liberty with Mr. Whitefield's ministry, in the way of burlesque; a Scotch woman who was sitting by, but not in the party, very smartly reproved me, desired I would take an opportunity to read and pray over the eighth chapter of the epistle to the Romans, till I understood it; and added she was persuaded I should no longer despise Mr. Whitefield's ministry. I never can forget the remorse I felt from the reproof; and the advice, after I was awakened, produced a peculiar attention to the scripture recommended to my attention.

In the year 1755, I had occasion to make a purchase of a box, of which I was informed, a poor woman wanted to dispose. She afterwards informed me, there was something in my appearance that engaged her attention. She desired I would pay her a visit. I was ready to receive her invitation, and drank tea with her the next Sunday. Like one truly taught of God, and desirous of communicating what she knew of him, she entered upon religious subjects. She asked me if I had ever heard Mr. Whitefield; I replied, I had once or twice, and had no objection to him, for I perceived she knew not how to speak affectionately enough of him. But I said I could not be reconciled to his lay preachers; and I

urged the common objection against them. I began to speak in high terms of my favourite preachers at church, and as she proposed my going with her to hear Mr. Whitefield, I urged her to go with me to hear those I had mentioned.

She was soon tired of my fare, and told me my favourite preachers could not give her what she wanted. It was by first going with her to the Tabernacle, that I was more peculiarly struck with the largeness of the congregation—the solemnity that sat upon it—the melody of the singing—Mr. Whitefield's striking appearance, and his earnestness in preaching. From this time, prejudice had no more place in my breast. Mr. Whitefield became increasingly dear to me, and I embraced all opportunities to hear him. Yet I had no knowledge of the evil of sin, and the depravity of my nature. On the 9th of April, 1760, being the Wednesday in the Easter-week, and the close of the holidays, as I was playing at cards with my fellow-servants; recollecting I might that evening hear Mr. Whitefield, I broke off in the midst of the game, which much discomposed and enraged my companions, who suspected where I was going. It was a night much to be remembered. I have reason to hope the scales of ignorance then fell from my eyes, a sense of my misery opened gradually to me, and I diligently inquired what I should do to be saved. I never more, however, played a game at cards. The text I well remember, was 1 Cor. xv. 51, 52. The introduction to the sermon, "Come, my brethren, we have from Sunday till yesterday been meditating upon the resurrection of our Lord, it is now time that we should think about our own." Could I recite the whole sermon, and it should read acceptably, it would want the energy, *viva voce*, which was so very peculiar to the preacher, that a resemblance is no where to be found. But it was God in the preacher that made the word efficacious; to him be the glory. It is a mercy he is not confined to the abilities of men whose talents are superior to those of their brethren. Much good was at that time doing by the instrumentality of men whose gifts were very inconsiderable; and the Lord could have wrought upon my soul by an inferior preacher. The state of things at the Tabernacle and Tottenham-court chapel, then differed from what it is at the present day, in this, that the supplies were not very considerable, Mr. Kinsman excepted. Hence there was a very great disproportion in the congregation; yet conversions were very frequent, by means of the substitutes provided by Mr. Whitefield in his absence, notwithstanding the inferiority of their gifts to his own. It is "not by might nor by power," which is but to say, it is not by human eloquence, but by the Spirit of the Lord, that work is wrought upon the soul which is essential to salvation. That the Lord may go on to honour your gifts, and that you may ever give him the glory of that good work he performs by you, is the prayer of, my dear friend, yours, &c.

LETTER IV.

My very dear friend,—In compliance with your request, my own history must be entwined with the history of others. I keep in mind the remark you made to me in a late conversation, namely, that it was the opinion of some that there had not been sufficient notice taken of Mr. Whitefield as a preacher, and that you wished I would endeavour to exhibit him more particularly in that view. I doubt I shall fail in the attempt; though my close connexion with his person as a private humble friend, as well as the attention I paid to his ministry, may be supposed to give me an advantage in writing upon this head.

The time he set apart for preparations for the pulpit, during my connexion with him, was not to be distinguished from the time he appropriated to other business. If he wanted to write a pamphlet upon any occasion, he was closeted; nor would he allow access to him, but on an emergency, while he was engaged in the work. But I never knew him engaged in the composition of a sermon until he was on board ship, when he employed himself partly in the composition of sermons, and reading very attentively the history of England written by different authors. He had formed a design of writing the history of Methodism, but never entered upon it. He was never more in retirement on a Saturday than on another day; nor sequestered at any particular time for a period longer than he used for his ordinary devotions. I never met with any thing like the form of a skeleton of a sermon among his papers, with which I was permitted to be very familiar, nor did he ever give me any idea of the importance of being habituated to the planning of a sermon. It is not injustice to his great character to say, I believe he knew nothing about such a kind of exercise.

Usually for an hour or two before he entered the pulpit, he claimed retirement; and on a sabbath day morning more particularly, he was accustomed to have Clarke's Bible, Matthew Henry's Comment, and Cruden's Concordance within his reach: his frame at that time was more than ordinarily devotional; I say more than ordinarily, because, though there was a vast vein of pleasantry usually in him, the intervals of conversation evidently appeared to be filled up with private ejaculation connected with praise. His rest was much interrupted, and his thoughts were much engaged with God in the night.

He has often said at the close of his very warm address, "This sermon I got when most of you who now hear me were fast asleep." He made very minute observations, and was much disposed to be conversant with life, from the lowest mechanic to the first characters in the land. He let nothing escape him, but turned all into gold that admitted of improvement; and, in one way or another, the occurrence of the week or the day furnished him with matter for the pulpit.—A specimen—when an extraordinary trial was going forwards, he would be present; and on observing the formality of the judge putting on his black cap to pronounce sentence, I have known him avail himself of it in the close of a sermon; with his eyes full of tears, and his heart almost too big to admit of speech, dropping into a momentary pause—"I am going now to put on my condemning cap: sinner, I must do it; I must pronounce sentence upon you—" and then in a tremendous strain of eloquence, recite our Lord's words, "Go ye cursed," not without a very powerful description of the nature of the curse. I again observe, that it would be only by hearing him, and by beholding his attitude and his tears, that a person could well conceive of the effect; for it was impossible but that solemnity must surround him, who, under God, became the means of making all solemn.

He had a most peculiar art of speaking personally to you, in a congregation of four thousand people, when no one would suspect his object. If I instance it in an effect upon the servant of the house, I presume it is not unsuitable. She had been remiss in her duty in the morning of the day. In the evening, before the family retired to rest, I found her under great dejection, the reason of which I did not apprehend; for it did not strike me, that in exemplifying a conduct inconsistent with the Christian's professed fidelity to his blessed Redeemer, he was drawing it from remissness of duty in a living character; but she felt it so sensibly as to be greatly distressed by it, until he relieved her mind by his usually amiable deportment. The next day, being about to leave town, he called out to her "Farewell;" she did not make her appearance, which he remarked to a female friend at dinner, who replied, "Sir, you have exceedingly wounded poor Betty," which excited in him a hearty laugh; and when I shut the coach-door upon him, he said, "Be sure to remember me to Betty; tell her the account is settled, and that I have nothing more against her."

The famous comedian, Shuter, who had a great partiality for Mr. Whitefield, showed him friendship, and often attended his ministry. At one period of his popularity he was acting in a drama under the character of Ramble. During the run of the performance he attended service on sabbath morning at Tottenham-court chapel, and was seated in the pew exactly opposite to the pulpit, and while Mr. Whitefield was giving full sally to his soul, and in his energetic address, was inviting sinners to the Saviour, he fixed himself full against Shuter, with his eye upon him, adding to what he had previously said, "And thou, poor Ramble, who hast long rambled from him, come you also. O end your rambling by coming to Jesus." Shuter was exceedingly struck, and coming in to Mr. Whitefield, said, "I thought I should have fainted, how could you serve me so?"—It was truly impressive to see him ascend the pulpit. My intimate knowledge of him admits of my acquitting him of the charge of affectation. He always appeared to enter the pulpit with a significance of countenance, that indicated he had something of importance which he wanted to divulge, and was anxious for the effect of the communication. His gravity on his descent was the same. As soon as ever he was seated in his chair, nature demanded relief, and gained it by a vast discharge from the stomach, usually with a considerable quantity of blood, before he was at liberty to speak. He was averse to much singing after preaching, supposing it diverted the savour of the subject. Nothing awkward, nothing careless, appeared about him in the pulpit, nor do I ever recollect his stumbling upon a word. To his ordinary as well as to his public appearance, this observation applies; whether he frowned or smiled, whether he looked grave or placid, it was nature acting in him.

Professed orators might object to his hands being lifted up too high, and it is to be lamented that in that attitude, rather than in any other, he is represented in print. His own reflection upon that picture was, when it was first put into his hands, "Sure I do not look such a sour creature as this sets me forth; if I thought I did, I should hate myself." It is necessary to remark, that the attitude was very transient, and always accompanied by some expressions which would justify it. He sometimes had occasion to speak of Peter's going out and weeping bitterly, and then he had a fold of his gown at command, which he put before his face with as much gracefulness as familiarity.

I hardly ever knew him go through a sermon without weeping, more or less, and I truly believe his were the tears of sincerity. His voice was often interrupted by his affection; and I have heard him say in the pulpit, "You blame me for weeping, but how can I help it, when you will not weep for yourselves, though your immortal souls are upon the verge of destruction, and for aught you know, you are hearing your last sermon, and

may never more have an opportunity to have Christ offered to you."* His freedom in the use of his passions often put my pride to the trial. I could hardly bear such unreserved use of tears, and the scope he gave to his feelings, for sometimes he exceedingly wept, stamped loudly and passionately, and was frequently so overcome, that, for a few seconds, you would suspect he never could recover; and when he did, nature required some little time to compose herself.

You may be sure from what has been said, that when he treated upon the sufferings of our Saviour, it was not without great pathos. He was very ready at that kind of painting which frequently answered the end of real scenery. As though Gethsemane were within sight, he would say, stretching out his hand —"Look yonder! what is that I see! it is my agonizing Lord!"—And, as though it were no difficult matter to catch the sound of the Saviour praying, he would exclaim, "Hark! hark! do not you hear?"—You may suppose that as this occurred frequently, the efficacy of it was destroyed; but, no; though we often knew what was coming, it was as new to us as though we had never heard it before.

That beautiful apostrophe, used by the prophet Jeremiah, "O earth, earth, earth, hear the word of the Lord," was very subservient to him, and never used impertinently.

He abounded with anecdotes, which though not always recited verbatim, were very just as to the matter of them. One, for instance, I remember, tending to illustrate the efficacy of prayer, though I have not been able to meet with it in the English history—it was the case of the London apprentices before Henry the Eighth, pleading his pardon of their insurrection. The monarch, moved by their sight, and their plea, "Mercy! mercy!" cried, "Take them away, I cannot bear it." The application you may suppose was, that if an earthly monarch of Henry's description, could be so moved, how forcible is the sinner's plea in the ears of Jesus Christ. The case of two Scotchmen, in the convulsion of the state at the time of Charles the Second, subserved his design; who, unavoidably obliged to pass some of the troops, were conceiving of their danger, and meditating what method was to be adopted, to come off safe: one proposed the wearing of a scull-cap; the other, supposing that would imply distrust of the providence of God, was determined to proceed bare-headed. The latter, being first laid hold of, and being interrogated, "Are you for the covenant?" replied "Yes;" and being farther asked, "What covenant?" answered, "The covenant of grace," by which reply, eluding further inquiry, he was let pass; the other, not answering satisfactorily, received a blow with the sabre, which penetrating through the cap, struck him dead. In the application, Mr. Whitefield, warning against vain confidence, cried, "Beware of your scull-caps." But here likewise the description upon paper, wanting the reality as exemplified by him with voice and motion, conveys but a very faint idea. However, it is a disadvantage which must be submitted to, especially as coming from my pen.

The difference of the times in which Mr. Whitefield made his public appearance, materially determined the matter of his sermons, and, in some measure, the manner of his address. He dealt far more in the explanatory and doctrinal mode of preaching on a Sabbath-day morning, than, perhaps, at any other time; and sometimes made a little, but by no means improper, show of learning. If he had read upon astronomy in the course of the week, you would be sure to discover it. He knew how to convert the centripetal motion of the heavenly bodies to the disposition of the Christian toward Christ, and the fatal attraction of the world would be very properly represented by a reference to the centrifugal. Whatever the world might think of him, he had his charms for the learned as well as for the unlearned; and as he held himself to be a debtor both to the wise and to the unwise, each received his due at such times. The peer and the peasant alike went away satisfied,

As though he heard the voice of God ever sounding in his ears the important admonition, "Work while it is called to-day," this was his work in London at one period of his life:—After administering the Lord's supper to several hundred communicants, at half an hour after six in the morning; reading the first and second service in the desk, which he did with the greatest propriety, and preaching full an hour, he read prayers and preached in the afternoon, previous to the evening service, at half an hour after five; and afterwards addressed a large society in public. His afternoon sermon used to be more general and exhortatory. In the evening he drew his bow at a venture, vindicated the doctrines of grace, fenced them with articles and homilies, referred to the martyrs' seal, and exemplified the power of divine grace in their sufferings, by quotations from the venerable Fox. Sinners were then closely plied, numbers of whom from curiosity coming to hear a sentence or two, were often compelled to hear the whole sermon. How many in the judgment day will rise to prove that they heard to the salvation of the soul. The society, which after sermon was encircled in the area of the Tabernacle, consisted of widows, mar-

* Mr. Winter remarks—The expression of offering Christ was considered exceptionable by some good men, contemporaries with him, whose judgment framed their phraseology; but though Mr. Whitefield was orthodox, his affection and zeal were not to be restrained from using free address, while labouring for the conversion of sinners. The language had been sanctioned by the old divines; and in the Scriptures we more than once read of "receiving Christ."

ried people, young men and spinsters, placed separately; all of whom, when a considerable part of the congregation was resettled, for hundreds used to stay upon the occasion, used to receive from him in the colloquial style, various exhortations comprised in short sentences, and suitable to their various stations. The practice of christianity in all its branches was then usually inculcated, not without some pertinent anecdote of a character worthy to be held up for an example, and in whose conduct the hints recommended were exemplified. To the young men for instance—A young man in the mercantile line whose uncle described him as such a jumble of religion and business, that he was fit for neither.—A widow would be held up to view, remarkable for her confidence in God. A young woman would be described, commendable for her chastity, prudence, and decorum—in a way that made it desirable for each description of characters to imitate them. Masters of households at these opportunities, parents and children, had their portion, but nothing enforced upon legal principles.

Perhaps Mr. Whitefield never preached greater sermons than at six in the morning, for at that hour he did preach winter and summer, on Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays. At these times his congregations were of the select description, and young men received admonitions similar with what were given in the society; and were cautioned, while they neglected the duty required from them under the bond of an indenture, not to anticipate the pleasures and advantages of future life. Beware of being golden apprentices, silver journeymen, and copper masters, was one of the cautions I remember upon those occasions.

His style was now colloquial, with little use of motion; pertinent expositions, with suitable remarks; and all comprehended within the hour. Christian experience principally made the subject of Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday evening lectures; when, frequently having funeral sermons to preach, the character and experience of the dead helped to elucidate the subject, led to press diligence in the Christian course, to reflect upon the blessing of faith on earth, and glory in heaven. Mr. Whitefield adopted the custom of the inhabitants of New England in their best days, of beginning the Sabbath at six o'clock on Saturday evenings. The custom could not be observed by many, but it was convenient to a few—a few compared with the multitude, but abstractedly considered, a large and respectable company. Now ministers of every description found a peculiar pleasure in relaxing their minds from the fatigues of study, and were highly entertained by his peculiarly excellent subjects, which were so suitable to the auditory, that I believe it was seldom disappointed. It was an opportunity peculiarly suited to apprentices and journeymen in some business, which allowed of their leaving work sooner than on other days, and availing themselves at least of the sermon; from which I also occasionally obtained my blessings. Had my memory been retentive, and I had studiously treasured up his rich remarks, how much more easily might I have met your wishes, and have answered the design of this letter! But though I have lost much of the letter of his sermons, the savour of them yet remains. The peculiar talents he possessed, subservient to great usefulness, can be but faintly guessed from his sermons in print; though, as formerly God has made the reading of them useful, I have no doubt but in future they will have their use. The eighteen taken in short hand, and faithfully transcribed by Mr. Gurney, have been supposed to do discredit to his memory, and therefore they were suppressed. But they who have been accustomed to hear him, may collect from them much of his genuine preaching. They were far from being the best specimens that might have been produced. He preached many of them when, in fact, he was almost incapable of preaching at all. His constitution, long before they were taken, had received its material shock, and they were all, except the two last, the production of a Wednesday evening; when by the current business of the day, he was fatigued and worn out. The "Good Shepherd" was sent him on board the ship. He was much disgusted with it, and expressed himself to me as in the 1440th letter of the third volume of his works —"It is not verbatim as I delivered it. In some places it makes me speak false concord, and even nonsense; in others the sense and connexion is destroyed by the injudicious disjointed paragraphs, and the whole is entirely unfit for the public review." His manuscript journal, as quoted by Dr. Gillies, notes—"September 15. This morning came a surreptitious copy of my Tabernacle farewell sermon, taken, as the short-hand writer professes, verbatim as I spoke it; but surely he is mistaken. The whole is so injudiciously paragraphed, and so wretchedly unconnected, that I owe no thanks to the misguided, though it may be well meant, zeal of the writer and publisher, be they whom they will. But such conduct is an unavoidable tax upon popularity." He was then like an ascending Elijah, and many were eager to catch his dropping mantle. In the sermons referred to there are certainly many jewels, though they may not be connected in a proper order.

Whatever fault criticism may find with his sermons from the press, they were, in the delivery, powerful to command the most devoted attention. I have been informed by good judges, that if many of the speeches in our two houses were to be given in their original state, they would not appear to the first ad-

vantage, nor would Mr. Whitefield's sermons have had criminal defects, had they been revised with his own pen. In the fifth and sixth volumes of his works, all the sermons he ever printed are comprised. It is very easy to distinguish them which were precomposed, from others which were preached extemporary. Of the latter, I notice Peter's denial of his Lord, and the true way of beholding the Lamb of God; Abraham's offering up his son Isaac; Christ the believer's husband, and the resurrection of Lazarus. These and others preserve the extemporary style, and fully serve to discover the exactness of the preacher. He shines brightest with a long text, on which fancy has scope to play, and the mind has liberty to range. However exact he may appear in the page, it is impossible for the natural man, who discerneth not the things of the Spirit, to understand him. God may make the page printed, the instrument in his hand to convert the sinner, and then he will no longer ask, "Doth he not speak parables?" but till then, as living he was, so dead, he is liable to the lash of severity: but the same Providence that preserved his person, will maintain his works: and thus he being dead, yet speaketh, and will continue to speak for a great while to come. Whatever invidious remarks they may make upon his written discourses, they cannot invalidate his preaching. Mr. Toplady called him the prince of preachers, and with good reason, for none in our day preached with the like effect. It is probable I shall have occasion to make farther mention of him in the course of the papers I have to communicate to you. That a large measure of the Spirit with which he spake, may rest upon you, and that you, with the supply of your measure of the gift of Christ, may be steadfast, unmoveable, and always abounding in the work of the Lord, until you cease to labour and enter into rest, is the prayer of, my very dear friend, yours, affectionately.

LETTER V.

My very dear friend,—Having, in my last letter taken the liberty to give my free thoughts of my ever honoured and dear friend and father, Mr. Whitefield, by whom, as an instrument in the hand of the Lord, I was brought into newness of life, I would again take up the thread of my own history. That God's people may review with gratitude what he hath done for them, their mind is to be the repository of his goodness. To Israel of old, God said by Moses, "Thou shalt remember all the way which the Lord thy God led thee." The tongue cannot utter, nor the pen relate, if the memory do not retain. I cannot well forget the days of my youth. The period to which I am now recurring is fresh upon my mind. By refusing to join in the amusements to which I had been addicted, and by my retreat into retirement, I was taken notice of, and afforded matter for ridicule. It was visible to the whole family by the alteration of my conduct, and the sedateness of my deportment, that some change had taken place. My relation said that going to Whitefield's would keep me out of harm's way, and for a little while, he did not much object against it; but the storm of persecution soon began to arise; indeed my afflictions were many and great; but, blessed be God, they were made supportable by the comforts which refreshed my soul. Now a guide and companion was wanting to regulate my zeal, but such a one was not at hand. The good woman, however, who brought me under the word, did every thing in her power to cherish the work she had reason to hope was began, and I took sweet counsel with her. I soon became a sermon hunter, and an admirer of all in whom I discovered the least disposition for the gospel. I began to recollect Mr. Romaine, whom I heard some years before, by straying one Thursday afternoon, while on an errand, into St. Dunstan's, Fleet-street. I heard he preached at St. Bartholomew's, Smithfield; and going one Sunday morning there, I heard Mr. Haweis, by whom I was first and greatly comforted. O how precious was the word of the Lord to my soul that day. I feel something of it as I write, but it is more like the gathering of wind with a fan, than like the heavenly breeze which that day blew upon my soul.—Soon after this, I went to hear Mr. Hitchen, who preached at White's-row, Spitalfields, and, struck with his animating, ingenious, and critical expositions, delivered on Sabbath-day mornings, I became a constant attendant for twelve months. To what to attribute it I know not, whether the novelty of the exercise, my superficial knowledge, or the magnitude of his gift, and the forcibleness of his delivery; but it appeared to me no man could excel him; hardly any one came up to him. The eager attention of a numerous auditory met and fastened upon his lively exertions; and when he closed his exercise, the people, relieving their attention, seemed to say one to another, We have heard great things to-day.

Now it was that I wished to possess a Bible. I might by saving up the few pence which occasionally came to me, have bought one in time, but it was much impressed upon my mind, that I must beg one of Mr. Hitchen. The Bible which lay in the kitchen was withheld from me. I did not know that there was a book society, and when I had knocked at Mr. Hitchen's door, I was much alarmed at my presumption, and was tempted to run away. The idea of speaking to a minister, whom I held in the highest veneration, was formidable, and I was surprised at his conde-

scension. He kindly attended to my request, and I hope I never shall forget the excellence of his advice, and the suitableness of his conversation. At the same time I consulted with him about entering into the Tabernacle society. He persuaded me to put aside this design for awhile, and to be much in retirement. He also cautioned me against forming too favourable an opinion of professors from their exterior deportment, and I have frequently found the necessity of attending to it.

The impression of our mind is often from God; I have found it to be so in many instances. By such an impression I became increasingly desirous to join the Tabernacle. I soon passed a favourable examination by Mr. Middleton, a truly excellent man of God, and was admitted. At this juncture I begged the acquaintance of a most amiable youth, who for five years was my familiar friend. He was poor, but rich in grace. He had been renounced by his mother for his religion. Her prejudices were not to be conquered, nor her judgment to be informed; she died at enmity with him, though he sought in the most becoming manner to conciliate her affection. He died triumphantly, of a putrid fever, in which I gave him all the attendance in my power, and was affected, but not laid aside by it. He was in the time mentioned, but one, though the first of a circle of young people who met frequently in a poor woman's room, to sing, pray, and read the scriptures together. It was a blessed retreat from the clamours of a noisy workshop, where I was exposed to cruelty and insult, from six in the morning until eight in the evening. The Bible now became my food. Whatever trials and temptations I was exposed to at this time, and they were very many, I was comforted under them. We used to go to the house of God in company; I can never forget, how many seasons of refreshing from the presence of the Lord we had at the sacred supper; sometimes at St. Alban's church, Wood-street, at half an hour after six in the morning, winter and summer; but more generally at the Tabernacle and Tottenham-court chapel, at the same hour. At that time my constitution was feeble, and my clothing insufficient for the winter, but the comforts which refreshed my soul, made me superior to every thing I endured. To give scripture epithets to the places in which these seasons were enjoyed, they were Beth-els and Peni-els—they were as the house of God, wherein I beheld his glory. While I gave my more constant attendance upon the ministry of my dear and honoured father, Mr. Whitefield, and his stated assistants; I also heard with delight and to profit, Messrs. Romaine, Jones, Maddan, Venn, &c. &c. each of them had a message from God to me. Blessed be his name for those halcyon days. But the happy period which included them was not a morning without clouds, nor was my walk free from imperfections. I did many things which I ought not to have done. My zeal carried me into many extravagances, and I sometimes broke the bounds of duty to hear the word. Whenever I could hear an evening sermon, or attend a letter-reading —for Mr. Whitefield read letters publicly— it set me above earth; and when I had heard the conclusion of a sermon, which I now and then did by trespassing upon the time appointed for leaving work a few minutes, precipitately climbing the Artillery-ground gates, and running on the full stretch to the Tabernacle, I almost envied the congregation who appeared to me to be all enjoyment. Though I could seldom attend preaching, I could on a Wednesday evening reach the class, a detached company of the society who met together to relate christian experience; and here also, I often lost my burden, obtained a blessing, and found others as well as myself felt the briars and thorns of the wilderness.

The Rev. Mr. Green, an occasional assistant to Mr. Whitefield, who subsisted by teaching a school; was hearing some of his scholars read one day in the fourteenth chapter of the first epistle to the Corinthians: he was led to reflect upon the mode of prophesying mentioned in that chapter, and he thought it justified the order observed by the Quakers. He proposed to a venerable friend the institution of a meeting in a similar way. Monday evenings were the times appointed for holding these meetings. He began as usual, and after following a short sermon with singing an hymn, he sat down and gave liberty to any one who was disposed to speak of the work of grace upon his heart, or to deliver a short exhortation. The meeting was crowded; it began late and held long. I could therefore enjoy my share of it. Several young men made their appearance on these occasions, and discovered good natural abilities; among these I may particularly mention, the Rev. Mr. Spencer,* the late Rev. Peter Sampson, of Truro, in Cornwall, and the late Rev. Mr. West, a very popular preacher in London. These I was very intimately acquainted with; but there were others whom I do not mention, whose ministerial talents were first discovered in this exercise. Animated with a degree of zeal, I stood up one evening after many struggles with myself upon the propriety of the attempt. My appearance was singular. I stood upon a form, a meagre youth of eighteen, and meanly apparelled. I introduced myself in the words of the Psalmist, "Come and hear all ye that

* Mr. W. subjoins in a note—Mr. Spencer, by diligence in study, and perseverance in grace, has acquired and sustained the character of an eminent scholar and able minister. He was in the curacy of Bradford between twenty and thirty years, and now resides in the adjacent parish of Wingfield, of which he is the esteemed rector. Mr. Crouch, vice-president of Edmund-hall, and several other evangelical clergymen, were educated by him.

fear God, and I will declare what he hath done for my soul." I found much enlargement, and from that time became one of the speakers. What I had to say was kindly received. I now employed part of the Lord's days in visiting the sick; and many companies of young people meeting together immediately after the hour of eight o'clock in the evening, whose business prevented them from attending the public ministry, I was encouraged to exercise my talents among them, by exhorting and expounding the Scriptures. Thus my very small intervals from secular employ were occupied in spiritual services. By this means I became known pretty largely, and was unexpectedly brought into a large sphere.

Though thus encouraged, I had no idea of being disengaged from secular employ. I had formed my own plan of life, little thinking that it was contrary to the will of God, and that he had a different design in view. By this time my sister had become a spiritual companion to me, and walked with me in all the ordinances of the gospel. I had designed to live with her, and by every means in my power, to make her life comfortable. We frequently contemplated the mutual happiness we should enjoy when I came out of my apprenticeship. But her health rapidly declined, she became unable to get her bread, and in a month after I came out of my time, I had her to bury. This was a sore affliction to me. Attention to her in her latter days, interrupted the course I have above described. The tenderest affection subsisted between us, and instead of labouring for her future subsistence, I had to work out a debt contracted for her support in months past; and augmented by her funeral.

I was frequently solicited to appear more publicly, but recoiled at the idea. It was hinted by many that Providence did not intend to continue me in the employ of a watergilder. Mr. Green used some arguments to excite my attention to the ministry, which made me think that the Lord at some time or other, might employ me in his work, but I never expected higher preferment than to be a local preacher.—Mr. Sampson above-mentioned, called upon me one day, and used earnest solicitation with me to supply a congregation alternately with himself and others at Cheshunt, in Hertfordshire. After some debate upon the motion, I then consented to submit to the trial of my acceptance. I was then desired to cast in my labours at Gravesend, with which request I complied, endeavouring that my time for business might suffer as little encroachment as possible. My constitution was very weak, and I struggled under a great share of indisposition, which God graciously carried me through. But on the reflection, I am astonished that I was so supported. My relation continued very churlish to me, cramped me in my wages, and made my life very uncomfortable. I continued with him nine months only, after I was out of my apprenticeship, and by hard work and hard fare, was nearly able to say, "I owe no man any thing but love." He came one morning into the shop, when there was not the least cause to find fault, and in a violent outrage, in which he used infamous language, insisted that I should do no more work. I have reason to think he did not mean as he said, but I replied I would take him at his word, that his usage had worn out my spirits, and I would cast myself upon God. He burlesqued the idea of Providence, read my destiny to be most deplorable, and signified I should soon want bread.* His words alarmed my fears; but I was enabled to counteract fear by the exercise of faith. I have since reason to think he had heard of my preaching, and that his corruptions were roused by the report. The business itself was injurious to my nerves. The continual discouragement I was under preyed upon my mind; my having adventured into the ministry, was attended with much conflict, so that the time under review was a time of trouble. I pause and bring the scene near. I enter very circumstantially into it. I do not forget that there were secret faults in my conduct, which, though only visible to the eye of Omniscience and my own conscience, must not be forgotten by me. Indeed they cannot; my soul hath them still in remembrance, and is humbled within me. The tempter had his instruments by which he wrought. By artless simplicity, I was exposed to danger, but not overcome so as to bring reproach upon the cause of God. Benevolence and sympathy for the distresses of others, while I was distressed myself, hurried me into imprudence; but the Lord upheld my soul, and integrity and uprightness preserved me. I was not so happy yet as to be under the eye and guidance of one who might watch over me. Intemperate zeal, and imprudence in many instances discovered themselves; and I was afraid of spiritual sloth, and of any thing that was contrary to the life and power of godliness. I bless God that he afforded me cause to be thankful, and that from that period, his mercy has been like a current not to be obstructed. It has run to this moment. Bless the Lord, O my soul, bless the Lord, my ever dear friend, to whom this history is addressed. I bless him on your account. Interested in all the mercies he has conferred

* Mr. Winter adds—Thus we parted, and I doubt not but his conduct towards me has since filled him with bitter remorse. I knew this from words he afterwards uttered to me, and to which he would have added more if I would have suffered the confession. But God has forgiven the debt of sin against him, and has thereby set me an example to forgive all his unkindness towards me. At his death, he left me twenty pounds, with an apology in his will for not leaving me more.

upon you, I remain, ever, yours, affectionately, &c.

LETTER VI.

My very dear friend,—In reviewing the history of my life, and addressing it to you, I conceive that I am giving glory to God. My object is, as far as I am the subject of it, and that is far indeed, to utter the memory of his great goodness. When the breach between my relation and myself became entire, I knew not what to do. The trade I had been brought up to did not afford many masters; but I was in hope I might obtain work somewhere, or be directed into some other line. He who knoweth all things knows how unambitious my mind was, how sincerely I was attached to manual labour, and how conscientiously I intended to engage myself under another employer. But not knowing what to do, immediately on my sudden separation from Mr. Winter, I betook myself to Mr. How, to give vent to a heart big with sorrow. Mr. How was an excellent man, and though in trade, at which he worked hard, of good preaching talents and some learning. After labouring with reputation and success in the ministry for a few years, he was taken home to enjoy an early reward. He ministered what consolation he could to me. He was going to Chatham for the ensuing sabbath, prevailed upon me to bear him company as far as Gravesend, and advised me to stop there a few days to divert my distress of mind. While at Gravesend, the congregation of Chatham sent me an invitation to preach to them, and desired me to fix the time for my coming. Mr. How urged my embracing the invitation. The day for my going was fixed, and it being near Christmas, I chose the angel's message to the shepherds, as proper for the season, and for a stranger to introduce himself with into a new congregation. But what a situation did I seem to be in! I never can forget the moment I entered the pulpit, the deadness that seized my soul, and the cloud that overspread my understanding. I was so shut up that I did not think it possible any thing spoken could gain acceptance. I was ashamed to see any body afterwards, and continued in the pulpit till the congregation was quite gone, though several loitered about the door. I had various conjectures concerning the treatment I might receive in going into the house; upon the whole, I concluded that though humanity might be exercised towards me, disapprobation of my service must be expressed; and that I should be forbidden to enter the pulpit again. But to my great surprise, I found the people lingering about the door anxious to embrace an opportunity to express the satisfaction they received; the dwelling-house likewise was full of friends, all of whom took me by the hand, gave me their blessing, and said they had been reminded of old times; and without consulting me upon the matter, proceeded to plan me out a round for preaching for many days; but I opposed the motion, telling them that I only came into the country by the advice of my friend Mr. How, to relax my mind for a few days, and that I must return to London to seek after business. They opposed my determination, remarking that I was a young man free of incumbrance, and quite at liberty; that they thought preaching the gospel was business sufficient for me, to which I might attend without being burdensome to the church. I spent a few weeks between Gravesend and Canterbury, but was under great uneasiness of mind, and on my return to London visited the Rev. Mr. Elliot, with whom I had a prior acquaintance, and who, as well as Mr. Green, had encouraged me to embark in the work of the ministry.

I know not whether any one has put forth Mr. Elliot's life, therefore would devote a few lines to represent him. He was born in the west of England, finished his education at Bennet's College, Cambridge. His principal preferment was a chaplainship at St. George's Hospital, Hyde-park. He was a profound mathematician, of very deep and close thought upon divinity subjects, a very humble, holy man, who exercised great grace in deep poverty. Dr. Dodd endeavoured to raise himself at the expense of this good man's reputation, and exciting an alarm at a sermon he preached upon Gal. ii. 21., became the means of his being turned out of his chaplainship. He printed the exceptionable sermon under a title that made it still more exceptionable. He publicly addressed the doctor in a letter, at the reading of which, I have good reason to say, he fainted. Mr. Elliot, whose propensity to close thinking led him to weigh exactly every subject he took in hand, found no difficulty in leaving the establishment. He became the pastor of a church of his own raising, which was well organized, and assembled at a meeting-house in Cannon-street. He was universally esteemed by Christians of all denominations; and was requested, in the year 1762, the time of Mr. Whitefield's long suspension from labour, to become his assistant at Tottenham-court; but his gifts by no means suited that congregation, and it dwindled under him to such a degree, that he could not be continued. Mr. Watts, bookseller, near Moorfields, a man of learning and close reasoning, became one of his church members. In a conference-meeting, Mr. Watts entered into a very warm debate with him upon the doctrine of the Trinity; the debate was occasioned by some little accidental circumstance, which arose in the course of the conference, and it drove poor Mr. Elliot into Sabellianism. By this event

he lost his respect and popularity, lived in poverty and obscurity, and died in the pulpit while preaching to a small congregation, which constantly heard him in Glass-house-yard, Goswell-street. He once had a very violent fever, which threatened his life; in the delirium of which he went through a service, supposed by him public, repeated his text, and preached his sermon with the strictest propriety. He once told Mr. How, that he studied the doctrine of election with that intenseness, that he knew not whether he came out of his study upon his head or upon his heels. His wife was a considerable trial to him. She acquired good property by the millinery business, but denied him the comfort of it. He was sometimes obliged to sell his books for bread; but while poor himself, he was a friend to the poor. By the hard measures he latterly met with, he became a little petulant; but he bore his persecutions for Christ's sake, and his family trials, with great temper and composure, and was a great ornament to his profession. He has left several performances. Those in favour of his new sentiment I am a stranger to. Those relating to the peculiar truths of the gospel are worthy of attention; he was very harsh in his delivery, close in his reasoning, and unimbellished in his style.

Of Mr. Green above mentioned, it is to be observed, that he was a fine classical scholar, and that he also understood the mathematics well. He said he was a competent master of eight languages, but he was a very uncouth reader and speaker. He never could gain a congregation at Tottenham-court; at Fetter-lane, he met with attention. The liberty he gave to any to speak, opened a way for the Antinomians to deliver their sentiments, with whom he entered into large and long public disputations. His Monday evening exercises degenerated into formal disputes, and knowing his strength, he was fond of them. The Arians took him up, and by one of them he was one evening so foiled, that he publicly acknowledged he had been wrong all his life in his notions of the Trinity, notwithstanding he had published upon the subject. In this state of mind he continued a week. It produced great distress of soul, and though he died sound in the faith, he was so shocked by his temporary recantation of it, that he never after lifted up his head.

The case of these two good men is a caution to us not to be too confident in our powers. While I think of them, I think also of the Apostle's admonition, "Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall." Many good men, designing honestly to defend the doctrine of the Trinity, err shockingly in their illustrations of it; and give more advantage to the adversary than they are aware of, as well as drive their opponents into notions they never would have thought of, had they been treated with more temper. We are safe by taking the subject as the sacred Scripture gives it, and by avoiding to explain what is inexplicable.

Let us, my dearest friend, adore what we cannot comprehend, and shield ourselves from error by the words which the Holy Ghost teacheth. Rather than puzzle ourselves and our hearers with matters which are too high for either, let us be content with things revealed. In my last interview with Mr. Elliot, he said he heard me advance with acceptance the very same things he did with disgust. I told him, when a man's sentiments are supposed orthodox, people will give him credit; that the subject, for he mentioned it, evidently led me to treat of Jesus Christ in his mediatorial capacity. I heard him that evening preach an excellent sermon from Heb. xiii. 5. I hope, through the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, he is now in glory. That we may there meet him is the prayer of, my very dear friend, yours, affectionately, &c.

LETTER VII.

My very dear friend,—To them that suffer according to the will of God, is the instruction, that they should commit the keeping of their souls to him. May we not understand the apostle Peter, by a figure of speech recommending the resignation of the whole man to God? The admonition befits not only the fiercely persecuted, to whom it was first addressed, but likewise others in every age, and with the rest, those who are in such a state of preponderation as to be uncertain which way the balance will turn; whose path is so intricate that they know not which way to go; the prospect of whose duty is so obscured, as that they know not what to do. This was really the case with me, when I returned from my Chatham excursion. I earnestly sought employ in the business to which I had been brought up, but could obtain none. I did not on any consideration intend to see Mr. Winter; I very studiously avoided his house and person, nor did I see him for some months after. My absence from London alarmed many of my Christian friends, some of whom censured me. While I was conscious to myself, I did not wish to eat the bread of idleness, my present circumstances were attributed to indolence of disposition. This made my burden the heavier. Mr. Elliot, whom I frequently called upon, encouraged me to preach; but I one day told him, such were the surmises of my friends, that it became necessary I should convince them they were under a mistake, by turning my thoughts to service; and I begged him to use his endeavours to procure me a place. He warmly

remonstrated against such a step, pressed me with questions respecting my call to preach the gospel, submitted to my consideration, 1 Cor. ix. 16, and requested me patiently to wait for the opening of Providence. He had taken upon him the superintendency of the congregation on Portsmouth Common, at their particular desire, in which he had been made very useful, by the repeated visits he had made. This congregation had been raised by Mr. Whitefield, and his assistants, but had been long in a state of neglect, or visited very seldom. Mr. Elliot introduced me to this people, and the Lord was pleased to bless my efforts among them. I twice repeated my visit. But whatever pleasure the people gained, they were seasons of humiliation to me. I began to see the importance of the work in a stronger light than ever; my insufficiency for it likewise affected me much. I strove to meditate, but could not; and often went into the pulpit unprepared. It must be observed all this time, I was wholly illiterate. My unsettled state was unfavourable to improvement, and I had no one to give me the least instruction. Unfortunately, I adopted the Hebrew instead of the English grammar, by which my idea of the subject of grammar was too superficial; and I was a considerable time before I could understand the doctrine of the eight parts of speech. I now also entered upon the Latin and Greek grammar. By reading good authors, I saw my own defects in their excellencies, and endeavoured to correct them. My poverty and want of retirement, were great obstructions to my progress. The gratuities I received for my service, merely defrayed my journies. My clerical friends gave me neither hints nor helps. I frequently pored over subjects, and left them as I found them. I had not resolution to ask questions of those who might have helped me. My modesty has in this been a disadvantage to me, and it may be pride has attached itself to modesty. Men of understanding, and of some literature, have usually made a part of the congregations I preached to at my first coming out; and when I have suspected them to be present, it was a vast embarrassment to me. I fell under one mistake, against which young preachers should be guarded, especially they who come out under deficiency of knowledge, and that was being devoted to letter writing. How much time have I employed in that way, which should have been devoted to the preparation for the pulpit! The motive for so doing was pure, though the thing itself was wrong. I should have recollected that pulpit exercises and literary pursuits required my time. I did indeed recollect, but fainted and sunk under discouragement. I visited too often, and made my visits too long. One circumstance I cannot omit to take notice of—I sometimes was in a state of doubt respecting the propriety of the constructions I put upon texts of Scripture, which I had selected for my use in the pulpit. I had not met with expository helps; when being asked to dine with a respectable tradesman, and going some time before dinner, I was introduced into a parlour, where was a large book-case, which contained Dr. Gill's exposition. I amused myself by referring to particular texts I had preached from at different times, on which I gained no information, but relied on my own meditation; and in every one I found a coincidence of thought with the doctor. This was a comfort to me.

Whatever deficiency I was under, the Lord conveyed a blessing by the use of such a degree of ability as I possessed. An innovation being made upon the Calvinistic cause at Sheerness by Mr. Wesley's people, occasioned the leading people in that place, who had contented themselves with reading sermons, rather than countenance men of inferior talents, to make exertion for immediate help, while I was spending my time between Canterbury and Chatham. I was therefore invited over in haste. I walked over from Sittingbourn on a severe winter's day, and in the evening, addressed the people from Judges vi. 13. It had an amazing effect. I became a frequent and an acceptable visiter, and cannot easily forget the times of refreshing the Lord vouchsafed us from his presence. Mr. Shrubsole, who till then had contented himself with being a reader, from that time became a preacher; and the cause, till then cramped, became under his ministry very flourishing. There lived an eminent old saint by the name of Wadsworth, who had been separated from the society by disgust, but from that time became reconciled and reunited; and as the testimony of his affection to me, when he died, left me half-a-crown and his Bible. The first legacy I ever received.

At this period, which was 1766, I was wandering in the parts mentioned already, and waiting for farther intimations of the will of God. I had frequently heard Mr. Whitefield lament the want of ministers in America. I knew he had sent some who were equally deficient in point of learning with myself, and I concluded, from the kind reception their ministry had met with, my labours, with the blessing of God, might be acceptable also. But a difficulty was before me, which was, how to gain an introduction to Mr. Whitefield. He was accessible but to few. I knew his connexions were very large; and this may be admitted as a reasonable apology for the caution which he used in admitting people to him. He would never be surprised into conversation. You could not knock at his door and be allowed to enter at any time. "Who is it?" "What is his business?" and such like inquiries, usually preceded admis-

sion; and if admission were granted, it was thus: "Tell him to come to-morrow morning at six o'clock, perhaps five, or immediately after preaching; if he is later, I cannot see him." A person who went to consult him upon going into the ministry, might expect to be treated with severity, if not well recommended, or if he had not something about him particularly engaging. One man saying, in answer to his inquiry, that he was a taylor, was dismissed with, "Go to rag-fair and buy old clothes." Another, who afterwards was of the clerical order, but sadly disgraced it, was admitted to preach in the vestry, one winter's morning at six o'clock, as a probationer. When a good domestic came into the study, the question was, "Well, Betty, what was the text this morning?" "These that have turned the world upside down have come hither also."—"That man shall come no more here; if God had called him to preach, he would have furnished him with a proper text."—A letter well written as to style, orthography, and decency, would prepossess him much in favour of a person.

By means of a pious young acquaintance, a native of Royston, in Hertfordshire, I had been introduced to Mr. Berridge, vicar of Everton, whose history is so well known that nothing need be said of him. He had given me countenance, I had gained the attention and esteem of many of his congregation, and he had endeared himself much to me, by his paternal deportment, and apostolic advice, such as I have found of excellent use in every stage of my ministry. I knew from the affection with which Mr. Whitefield always mentioned his name, and the honour in which he held his services, he must have great influence with him. I therefore paid a third visit to him, purposely to acquaint him with my views and wishes, and to beg him to introduce me to Mr. Whitefield, that I might by him be placed in some situation in America. O how kind did this man of God behave to me upon this occasion!

After having laid before me the many difficulties he judged I must meet with, and having very seriously exhorted me to pray to God to grant me direction and submission, he complied with my request, and sent me back to London with a letter to Mr. Whitefield. He gave me a mild reception; the interview was short. It was on Wednesday I waited upon him; he said he should expect me to preach at the Tabernacle on the next morning at six o'clock, and appointed the time when I should again come to him. I heard him in the evening, and felt much when he informed the congregation, that a stranger, recommended by Mr. Berridge, would preach on the morrow morning at six o'clock. I had little rest that night, and prayed rather than studied for the service. A larger congregation than usual assembled. The sextoness was astonished when she found I was going into the pulpit. When I made my appearance, the people were as much struck by seeing me, for many knew me, as I was by their general whisper. I endeavoured to speak from Eph. iii. 4. I was so exceedingly agitated that I knew not what I said. From that morning, however, the prejudice of my religious friends, under whose censure I had lain, was removed, and I found it a blessing to have Mr. Whitefield's suffrage. This was in February 1767, and I was under promise to pay Portsmouth another visit. Mr. Whitefield desired me to procure him a testimonium of myself from different places, whither I had gone, which I did, and in my absence, to write him some account of the dealings of God with me in his Providence and grace. He said he should have occasion to show it to some friends, and if any thing should turn out favourable, he would let me know; accordingly I wrote him some account, and in a week after was honoured with his first letter, of which the following is an exact copy:

"*London, January* 29, 1767.

"Dear Mr. Winter,—Your letter met with proper acceptance.—The first thing to be done now is to get some knowledge of the Latin—the method to be pursued we can talk of at your return to London. Mr. Green would make a suitable master—no time should be lost—one would hope that the various humiliations you have met with were intended as preparations for future exaltations.—The greatest preferment under heaven, is to be an able, painful, faithful, successful, suffering, cast-out minister of the New Testament. That this may be your happy lot is the hearty prayer of, dear Mr. Winter, yours, &c. in our common Lord,

"G. W."

This letter exceedingly animated me, and my expectations began to soar; but by reflection, I was enabled to check them. I considered that the best of men are but men; and thought if by Mr. Whitefield's instrumentality I should be brought into a desirable situation, trials would be answerable to it. At the commencement of my connexion with my honoured friend, and since, I have found it good, neither to seek nor to expect great things.

The morning after I returned from Portsmouth, I waited early upon Mr. Whitefield. He received me with a mixture of kindness and severity; and for several days kept me in a state of suspense. At last he set me upon a little business, and told me he should expect me to preach two mornings in the week. He appointed me particular times when I was to call upon him; when besides sending me upon some errands, of which he always had a great number, he set me to

transcribe some of his manuscripts. He showed himself much dissatisfied with my writing and orthography, both of which certainly stood in need of correction. He desired me to take a lodging near the chapel, where he could conveniently send for me; gave me a little money to defray my expenses, and by degrees brought me into a capacity to be useful to him. I was very enervated indeed, my scene was new, I was filled with fear, and shocked by the cautious behaviour of Mr. Whitefield, for which I can plead an excuse. He had frequently been imposed upon by people who had very ungenerously served themselves of him, without being of any service to him. In the latter part of his life he was particularly cautious how he disposed of his favours; but notwithstanding, he was liable to considerable imposition. Soon after, he proposed my going to Mr. Green's for a few hours in the day, to be initiated into the Latin grammar; but he interrupted the design by requiring a close attention to his own business, and the large demand he made of my pulpit services; for it pleased God to give my ministry a very kind acceptance, and I have met with some instances of its having been useful. A single quarter of a year closed my school exercise, in which I am ashamed but constrained to say I hardly gained knowledge enough to decline *musa*. It was plain Mr. Whitefield did not intend to promote my literary improvement. Indeed, he said, Latin was of little or no use, and that they who wish to enter upon it late in life, had better endeavour to acquire a good knowledge of their mother tongue, in which many preachers, while they aim at Latin, are very deficient. Having just at this time attended Mr. Wesley's conference, and having heard him speak to the same effect, he was confirmed in this sentiment, and discouraged any perseverance. Notwithstanding Mr. Whitefield's opinion thus freely expressed, and his deportment to me corresponding with it, my mind hankered greatly after some smatterings of Latin and Greek; partly that the want of it might be no obstacle in the way of my ordination, and partly to cut off objections against my ministry from them who are apt to think it a *sine qua non* for a preacher. But I had much temptation to relax my exertion, my memory being very bad, my nerves weak, and my genius small. Yet sensible of the value of a good education, I have never neglected an effort after a portion of it. Considering the weakness of my capacity, and that for many years I had no settled place of abode, nor any person to assist me; that I have been constantly employed in preaching the word almost every night in the week to different congregations, and twice or thrice every sabbath through the year, I have cause to be thankful for the little I have acquired. What a story I have got into: it swells, and I fear will become tedious. If you had not pressed me to give it you, I would not have imposed it upon you. One circumstance is an introduction to another, in the review of which I am affected with humiliation and thankfulness. How far you may be gratified I cannot say. It is a story that in the sequel connects with the Lord's dealings with you. That he may deal bountifully with you to the end of your days, as he has in the beginning of them, is the prayer of, my very dear friend, yours, &c.

LETTER VIII.

My very dear friend,—Did it ever strike you that I am of a timid turn of mind? I had a great deal more of it in my youth than I had at the time you first knew me, or than I now have. As though the late Mr. Winter were the principal person in the world I had occasion to fear, I was in perpetual dread of him. He was a great enemy to the gospel, very keen to observe what was amiss in its professors, and very high in his religious principles. Some circumstances in my early connexion with Mr. Whitefield, had he been permitted to have known them, would have been remarked with just severity. When it was reported to him that I preached at the Tabernacle, he disbelieved it, saying, "Whitefield would not let such a fool stand up in his place;" but finding it true, he said "he would suffer a chimney-sweeper to preach to save himself." Of all reflections ever cast upon Mr. Whitefield, this should have been the last, for self-sparing was no part of his character. He attempted to gratify his curiosity several times by hearing me, but was disappointed. In coming one time, he heard Mr. Middleton, who was the most methodical preacher in the Tabernacle at that time. He was treating upon the Lord's supper. He gained Mr. Winter's attention, who then for the first time, thought any thing offered at the Tabernacle worthy of regard. He came afterwards with intention to hear Mr. Whitefield seriously, whom he had often heard in ridicule, and it pleased God to make the word efficacious. The effect was blessed indeed. His family had the comfort of it, and it was visible to all who knew him.

Instantly upon the removal of his prejudices he sent for me to come to his house, took opportunity to lament that his deportment had been very unsuitable to me, assured me he had nothing against me, and wished me to overlook all that was wrong. He became a communicant at the Tabernacle, and though he afterwards dropped into some of his former life, and was staggered by the bad conduct of some professors, from the re-

port I had of his dying moments by a good man not liable to be imposed upon, I hope all ended well. Though I had frequent intercourse with him, and a close correspondence, and he went some of my journies with me, yet I never could be truly open and familiar with him.

I am afraid to say every thing which might be brought upon the tapis for three years.—Perhaps it would be putting the picture of so valuable a man as Mr. Whitefield was, into too deep a shade, to say that he was not a fit person for a young man in humble circumstances to be connected with. He was not satisfied with deficient abilities, but he did not sufficiently encourage the use of the lamp for their improvement. The attention of a youth designed for the ministry, was too much diverted from the main object, and devoted too much to objects comparatively trifling. I was considered as much the steward of his house as his assistant in the ministry. While I was kept in bay and at anchor, many piloted by him, set sail, and I at last knew not whether I were to indulge a hope for America or not. My fidelity being proved, I became one of the family, slept in the room of my honoured patron, and had the privilege to sit at his table. I judged I was where I should be; and was determined never to flinch from the path of duty, nor intentionally to grieve the man whom I knew had many burdens upon him, and for whom I could have laid down my life. But I was unequal to my sphere, and sunk under my burden. It pleased the Lord thrice in the year to lay me upon a bed of sickness. In a letter from Mr. Whitefield to Mr. Adams, dated October 12, 1767, stands this sentence, "Heaven is the believer's only resting place. There we shall not be disturbed; I do not know but Mr. Winter will get there soon; at present he is very ill." The faculty who attended me, said my life was precarious, and advised my being sent into the country. Their advice opened a way for my first journey to Bristol, where I was eight months, preaching and meeting the society every night in the week, and preaching three times on a Sabbath-day, except now and then, when a minister came through the city. At my first going, few could hear me speak; but the Lord strengthened body and voice together, and attended his word with his blessing.

On my return, I found Mr. Whitefield had been busy and successful in getting one and another ordained for the colonies, but he made no motion for me; this I thought hard, though I concealed the feeling of my disappointment. I now and then signified to Mr. Whitefield, that my inclination for America was as strong as ever. Imprudences in some of the missionaries, and the unbecoming manner in which others applied to the society for propagating the gospel, for admission into their service, made my application for orders much more difficult than it would formerly have been. While on a second visit to Bristol, which held four months, Mr. Whitefield wrote me a letter, informing me that a Mr. Wright who was a very principal person with him, had agreed with his relations to go to Georgia, to put the Orphan-house upon a new plan, and proposed to me whether I should like to go with them, there prosecute my studies, and be considered as domestic chaplain. I returned him answer, after making his motion matter of prayer, that I did not find freedom to go without ordination. This answer was of the Lord, for I was afterwards convinced that my going then and under the circumstances proposed, would have involved me in many difficulties. When Mr. Wright embarked for Georgia, I was sent for to London; and to other different capacities, in which I acted, an additional one was to read prayers, and bury the dead at Tottenham-court chapel; an employment that I entered upon only to oblige my most highly esteemed patron; for I knew, besides other inconveniences it would subject me to, it would make the probability of ordination at a greater distance than ever, if it came to the bishop's ear. For more than twelve months I performed the office of a curate. Having at seasonable opportunities continued still to express my inclination to go to America, Mr. Whitefield one day asked me, if I should have any objection to take the charge of a number of negroes? He informed me at the same time he had received a letter from some gentlemen,* requesting him to send them over a proper person for such a charge, and observed, that after entering upon it, and being recommended home for ordination for the service, there was no doubt but I should succeed. This had great weight with me, and though I thought it a tedious method, I was in hopes it would answer a good end at last. I told Mr. Whitefield I would give myself to his disposal, and hoped by him to discover the will of God. Several months past after this, no farther notice was taken of the business, though letters had passed between him and the gentlemen upon it. The reason appeared plain to me: Mr. Whitefield had made me very useful to himself, could repose confidence in me, and was unwilling to part with me. He had so delayed the business, that by the time I had arrived at Georgia, the gentlemen had given over all thoughts of my coming. He at last came to a determination that if I would go, I should go with him, and when the time of my departure was at hand, I went out not

* These were the executors of Mr. Zububuhler, late rector of Savannah: who by his will had provided for the support of a minister to instruct his negroes, but enjoining that the person employed should be a clergyman.

knowing whither I went, nor upon what condition. I only knew that I was bound for Georgia, and that I was going to teach the negroes the way of salvation. The necessary preparations for the voyage so engrossed my attention that I had little time to take a formal leave of my friends, nor did I want it, but for the sake of a select few. I had no inclination to preach a farewell sermon, but got off as quietly as I could on Friday, September 2d, 1769, with a party of friends in a Gravesend boat, to go to our vessel laying at Gravesend. Mr. Whitefield came the next day with a very large party, in coaches and chaises, and the next day preached two sermons, one in the morning in the little place called the Tabernacle, for the use of the church was denied him, and in the evening in the Market-place. I preached in the afternoon. Several of the company breakfasted with us on board the vessel, on Monday morning previous to the final leave, which they took immediately after.

By this time I had fully found out dear Mr. Whitefield's complexion, and indeed long before. Not doubting but that by Providence I was introduced to him, highly revering his character, and affectionately loving his person, I was determined to be like Diogenes, who would rather sustain the blows of the stick of his master Antisthenes, than be deprived of the advantage of his school.

The following are some of the promiscuous traits of his more private character, and I presume this is no improper place in which to give them. He used too much severity to young people, and required too much from them. He connected circumstances too humiliating with public services, in a young man with whom he could take liberty: urging that it was necessary as a curb to the vanity of human nature, and referred to the young Roman orators, who after being exalted by applauses, were sent upon the most trifling errands. His maxim was, if you love me you will serve me disinterestedly; hence he settled no certain income, or a very slender one upon his dependents, many of whom were sycophants, and while they professed to serve him, under-handedly served themselves effectually. Under this defect his charity in Georgia was materially injured, owing to the wrong conduct of some who insinuated themselves into his favour by humouring his weakness, and letting him act and speak without contradiction. He was impatient of contradiction; but this is a fault to be charged upon almost all great people. I could mention some. He was not happy in his wife, but I fear some, who had not all the religion they professed, contributed to his infelicity. He did not intentionally make his wife unhappy. He always preserved great decency and decorum in his conduct towards her. Her death set his mind much at liberty. She certainly did not behave in all respects as she ought. She could be under no temptation from his conduct towards the sex, for he was a very pure man, a strict example of the chastity he inculcated upon others. No time was to be wasted; and his expectations generally went before the ability of his servants to perform his commands. He was very exact to the time appointed for his stated meals; a few minutes delay would be considered a great fault. He was irritable, but soon appeased. Not patient enough one day to receive a reason for his being disappointed under a particular occurrence, he hurt the mind of one who was studious to please; he discovered it by the tears it occasioned, and on reflection, he himself burst into tears, saying, "I shall live to be a poor peevish old man, and every body will be tired of me." He frequently broke the force of his passion by saying, "How could you do so? I would not have served you so." He never commanded haughtily, and always took care to applaud when a person did right. He never indulged parties at his table; a select few might now and then breakfast with him, dine with him on a Sunday, or sup with him on a Wednesday night. In the latter indulgence he was scrupulously exact to break up in time. In the height of a conversation I have known him abruptly say, "But we forget ourselves," and rising from his seat, and advancing to the door, add, "Come, gentlemen, it is time for all good folks to be at home." Whether only by himself, or having but his second, a table must have been spread elegantly, though it produced but a loaf and a cheese. He was unjustly charged with being given to appetite. His table was never spread with variety. A cow-heel was his favourite dish, and I have known him cheerfully say, "How surprised would the world be, if they were to peep upon Doctor Squintum, and see a cow-heel only upon his table." He was neat to the extreme in his person and every thing about him. Not a paper must have been out of place, or put up irregularly. Each part of the furniture must have been likewise in its place before we retreated to rest. He said he did not think he should die easy, if he thought his gloves were out of their place. There was no rest after four in the morning, nor sitting up after ten in the evening. He never made a purchase but he paid the money immediately; for small articles the money was taken in the hand. He was truly generous, and seldom denied relief. More was expected from him than was meet. He was tenacious in his friendship, and when the transition of Providence moved from prosperity to adversity, he moved with it to abide by his friend. He felt sensibly when he was deserted, and would remark, "The world and the church ring changes." Disappointed by many, he had

not sufficient confidence in mankind; and from hence I believe it was, he dreaded the thought of outliving his usefulness. He often dined among his friends; usually connected a comprehensive prayer with his thanksgiving when the table was dismissed, in which he noticed particular cases relative to the family; and never protracted his visit long after dinner. He appeared often tired of popularity; and said, he almost envied the man who could take his choice of food at an eating-house, and pass unnoticed. He apprehended he should not glorify God in his death by any remarkable testimony, and was desirous to die suddenly.

Thus, my dear friend, I have aimed to gather up the fragments of a character truly excellent, that nothing may be lost. It is the character of a man who had his infirmities, but whose excellencies bore a far greater proportion. He knew himself, and lived under a measure of self-abhorrence, but he knew he was the redeemed of the Lord, and extolled that name by which he was called. Not to detract, but justly to represent, is my object in what I have written concerning him. I had no claim upon him when he took me into his house. I was abundantly indebted to him for his kindness, and his memory will be dear to me while with my hand I can subscribe myself, yours, very affectionately, in our dear Lord Jesus.

LETTER IX.

My very dear friend,—By taking notice of the history of the first Methodists, you may perceive they abounded in letter-writing. I have condemned myself for indulging correspondence, from conviction I should have been otherwise employed; but I have felt the consolation arising from the receipt of a letter to be inexpressibly great; and have highly gratified a friend by the writing of one. Advice is often conveyed by correspondence, that proves a guide to our conduct; and remarks, applied to our own case, sometimes prevent hasty steps, of which, on reflection, we might have cause to repent. In my situation, hitherto described, letters with which I was favoured from dear Mr. Berridge, were of great use indeed; an extract I will here insert from two of them.

"Pray frequently, and wait quietly, and the Lord will make your way plain.—Jesus trains up all his servants to waiting, and if you are called to the ministry, he will exercise your soul beforehand with sharp conflicts. Joseph must be cast first into a pit by his own brethren, then into a prison by his master, before he rules the kingdom; and David must be hunted as a flea upon the mountains, before he gets the sceptre. How can you tell what others feel, unless you have felt the same yourself? How can you sympathize with a prisoner, unless your own feet have been fast in the stocks? How can you comfort those who are cast down, unless you have been often at your wit's end? Expect nothing but conflicts, day after day, to humble and prove you, and teach you to speak a word in season to every one that is weary. This is indeed the high road to the kingdom for all, yet a minister's path is not only narrow and stony like others, but covered also with bushes and brakes; and if you labour to remove them by your own hands, they will quickly tear your flesh, and fill your fingers with thorns. Let your master remove them at your request; and remember it is always his work, as it is ever his delight, to clear our way and lead us on till sin and death are trodden down. Undertake nothing without first seeking direction from the Lord, and when any thing offers, that is plausible and inviting, beg of God to disappoint you if it be not according to his mind. You cannot safely rely on your own judgment, after God has told you, 'He that trusteth in his own heart is a fool.' This advice relates to all important changes in life. Go nowhere, settle nowhere, marry nowhere, without frequent usage of this prayer."

"I find your heart is yet looking towards America; this inclines me to think God will some time send you thither; in the mean while be thankful you have a pulpit in England to preach Jesus Christ in, and health to preach him. Be not in a hurry to go, lest you go without your passport, and then you go on a fool's errand. Do not wish to be any where but where you are, nor any thing but what you are. It is want of communion with God that makes our thoughts run a gadding. Daily beseech the Lord to make your way plain, then leave it to him to direct your steps. Wish not to do good in America next summer, but to do good in England every day you continue here." Oh that I had never swerved from the good advice of this truly apostolic man. My aim has been to have my conversation in the world according to it.

I have diverted your attention from the Friendship, Captain Ball, on board of which, Mr. Whitefield, Mr. Smith, who filled up Mr. Wright's place, and myself, were left by the company who had made the most they could of Mr. Whitefield. I had nothing to do but to forget my own people—I had no father's house to forget—and to commit myself unto the Lord. We spent the former part of the day in looking over our stores, setting things in order, and securing them from injury as well as we were able. As I dropped into leisure, I began to reflect upon the steps I had taken, and the leadings of divine Providence by which I was induced to take them. They all seemed satisfactory, and though I compared myself to a sparrow alone upon the house-top, I had a conviction that I was not alone. The Father of my mercies had been,

was then, and blessed be his holy name, has been ever since with me.

Mr. Whitefield began to familiarize himself to his naval situation, to acquaint himself with the crew and passengers, and proposed to render them all the kindness in his power. Had the captain embraced the former day's wind, we had probably been favoured with a speedy and prosperous passage; but by losing that opportunity we were greatly retarded. Against wind we went with the tide down the Pool, and were several days getting to the Downs. Now I first began to know what sea sickness was, and supposed by my recovering when we anchored at the Downs, it was all over, but as we attempted to advance I found I was much mistaken. Here we were wind-bound three weeks, opposite Deal. Dr. Gibbons came on board during our stay to see Mr. Whitefield. His business was to ordain one of his pupils to a dissenting church of ancient standing in that town. The same day the young gentleman to be ordained, and the Rev. Mr. Bradbury, of Ramsgate, came on board, and after many pressing solicitations, prevailed upon Mr. Whitefield, contrary to his intention, to come on shore, to attend the ordination and preach in the evening. This was very agreeable to my inclination, and I hope I shall never forget the solemnities of that day. The wind being settled against us, and the captain giving us leave, upon Mr. Bradbury's repeated and urgent request, Mr. Whitefield was prevailed upon to go to Ramsgate. He preached there twice, and was to have staid over the Sabbath-day, but not being able to overcome the uneasiness of his spirits, occasioned by a fear that we might stay too long, we took a chaise, and returned to our vessel, on board which, we had not been many hours, before the captain weighed anchor, and in the distant prospect of a favourable gale attempted to sail; but it only proved a conflict with the wind, to my no small mortification, for I was rendered incapable of every thing by the sea sickness.

After a second obstinate attempt, in which we were beating about Dungeness for a whole week without getting three leagues, and in which time I was not able to hold up my head, Providence was gracious, the wind was propitious, and we soon lost sight of land. It was a long while before I recovered; I plyed my book, and by the care that jointly fell upon me and my fellow passenger, Mr. Smith, who was Mr. Whitefield's companion and attendant to the last, I had a diversity of exercise. Mr. Whitefield spent his time in largely reading the History of England, composing sermons, writing letters, &c. and sometimes discovered such remarkable lowness and languor, as proved him not very fit to encounter the difficulties of a voyage to sea. He had great civilities and respect shown him, and was as constant in the discharge of the duties of his function as the weather would admit. Some circumstances however turned up to mar our happiness, particularly two bad men we had on board, one of whom I believe fled from England to save his life, the other by his conduct in Georgia, proved that he made no scruple to hazard his.

After the usual difficulties which attend the seas, we came near Charleston bar, and by reason of the lightness of our vessel, for it was deficient in ballast, we were detained in what is called Five-fathom-hole, a situation not very agreeable. When we got over the bar we were released from our ship by a pilot-boat, on the 30th of November, and on that evening, by the good hand of our God upon us, we set our feet upon the American shore. My endeavour throughout the whole of the passage was to give myself up to the Lord, and to keep from such an elatement of mind, as imaginary painted prospects often occasion to the no small after disappointment. In the course of conversation, Mr. Whitefield had dropped such a hint, as convinced me I might look rather for great crosses than great honours. He told me what he had concealed while on the English shore, that if I had as many to preach to as his bed-cabin would hold, I might think myself well off, and that I might expect to be whipped off the plantation when I had done.

My reception at Charleston was kind and hospitable; I supposed it to have been because I was Mr. Whitefield's friend. Mr. Whitefield's preaching in the cabin at sea had great energy in it, but it was with additional pleasure I once more heard him in a large congregation on the Sabbath-day. I was particularly affected at the Lord's table, where a considerable number of devout negroes were present. It was an emblem of heaven indeed, and afforded me encouragement to hope I should have the honour of gathering some from among the black tribes into the visible church, who being washed from their sins, should walk with Jesus in white.

We staid but ten days in Charleston. Curiosity was excited in many to know who and what I was. When known, it was desired that I would give a lecture to a serious company in a large school-room. I complied, and the word was kindly received, and if we had not left Charleston on the Sabbath afternoon, I was to have preached again. We had a very pleasant passage through the Sounds, and frequently went on shore and regaled ourselves in the woods. The simplicity of the negroes who rowed us was very diverting, whose weariness and fatigue served them for a song. I was much affected by it. We stopped at a plantation called Port-royal, where we were most kindly refreshed and entertained, and safely arrived at Savannah on the evening of December the fourteenth.

Mr. Whitefield was cheerful and easy; he seemed to have lost a weight of care. A great deal of his usually devotional frame connected with his cheerfulness. It surely became me, who was a stranger in a strange land, to be devotional, and to give myself wholly unto prayer. I bless the Lord I had no fear; I had some faith; and faithful was he who had called me, and whose exceeding great and precious promises were all mine own. Let others be encouraged by me to put their trust in the Lord; whoso trusteth in him shall never be confounded. You, with me, my dear friend, have reason to speak good of his name. O magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt his name together!—I am, yours, very affectionately, &c.

LETTER X.

My very dear friend,—Continually under the divine protection we may enjoy perfect peace, and being devoted to the will of God, he will take possession of the mind and keep it. What is now the matter of observation, was the matter of experience, when sitting for a little while alone in the canoe, where I was desired to remain, at the bottom of Savannah-bluff, the guardian of our property, while Messrs. Whitefield, Wright, and Smith, ascended to the town. It was dark before I was disengaged and escorted to Mr. Habersham's house, where Mr. Whitefield had preceded me. Mr. Habersham met me at the door, embraced me in his arms, saying, "I will be your friend, if nobody else will." It being his first salute, I supposed it was in consequence of something previously said by the company, and by the tenor of the conversation which went forward, I understood that I was but an unexpected guest. Mr. Habersham clapping me upon the knee, repeated, "I will be your friend, if nobody else will; I will stand by you: you shall instruct my negroes, whoever else refuses you." This brought to my recollection instantly what Mr. Whitefield said on board ship, viz. "That I might be thankful if I had as many to preach to as his bed-cabin would hold, and must not wonder, if for attempting to instruct the negroes, I were whipped off the plantation." However, most of Mr. Zububuhler's executors, the gentlemen into whose service I was entering, saw me, and all except two, behaved to me in a very respectful manner. The first night I lodged in Mr. Habersham's house. The next day I was fixed at a Mr. Bolton's, who accommodated strangers with lodgings. The room appointed for me had no fire-place in it, and the weather becoming very cold, I was put to much inconvenience; but I was determined I would not make my company cheap, whatever I might suffer; and that whatever reserve might be in my conduct, it should be entirely with a view to the glory of God. It was well in the end I adopted and maintained this resolution. Previous to my settlement, I spent some days with Mr. Whitefield at the Orphan-house, and by the time I returned to Savannah, the report of my design, in coming into the province, was noised abroad.—Some of the more sensible negroes facetiously said they were too wicked to be made good now. A few had their expectations raised by my coming, and seemed pleased with my errand. The white people in general conceived that I came there because I could not live in England, and I scarcely stirred out without hearing one and another say with the accent of contempt, "There goes the negro parson."

Perceiving that Mr. Bolton, at whose house my residence was fixed, was a serious man, I told him I longed to begin my mission in some way. I offered to be his chaplain, and asked him if he would allow me to open a public exposition in his house. He generously consented, and notice being given of my design, numbers both of white and black came, ond I epened with Rom. i. 15. "I am ready to preach the Gospel to you." The word was well received by the serious part of the audience, and perhaps would have been by the others, if I had not particularly discovered myself attached to the more sensible negroes, and given them to understand they were the subjects of my ministry.—I continued to preach in Mr. Bolton's house, to white and black all the time I staid in Savannah, once or twice a week as it was most convenient to me, and on the Sabbath-day evenings. This gave great offence, and the Rev. Mr. Zubly, the Presbyterian minister, did not a little oppose it. I applied for the use of the old Lutheran church which stood unoccupied, and offered any moderate rent the proprietors should require for the use of it, but it was refused merely because I preached to, and aimed at instructing the negroes. All were up in arms against me; many threatened me if I presumed to come into their plantation. A motion was made in the council to consider me as a nuisance to the province, and as such to silence me; but they could not carry the motion. However time and circumspection retrieved my reputation in some degree. The house I lodged in abounded with boarders, particularly at the sitting of the assembly. I generally endeavoured to be affable, but not forward; conversant, but not loquacious; short in my sittings after meals, and constant in my study. I was generally indulged with much liberty in family prayer, mornings and evenings, and frequently dropped a short pertinent hint from one or a few verses out of the portion I read. This gained attention, and by degrees I acquired credit, being mostly reproached by persons who knew least of me. The conversation of which I was the subject, usually concluded to this effect: "It is a pity

he thinks of being employed in a work that will bring him so little credit, while he has a capacity to be an acceptable minister to the white people, where one is wanting."

It may appear that this representation of myself savours of pride, but I can appeal to Him who alone knoweth the heart, that I only mention it to his praise. If I review any part of my outward conduct with satisfaction, I review the defects of all my duties before God with shame. However I might satisfy others, I was dissatisfied enough with myself. Strict morality will not compensate the want of spirituality, and of this I found myself deficient—may not the deficiency be laid to my charge!

It was not long before I was introduced to my immediate charge, that is the negroes upon the late Rev. Mr. Zubuhler's plantation, among whom I was to reside, as soon as the house was put in proper condition for my residence. The greatest number of these negroes were fresh purchased. They had conceived some kind of idea concerning me, but could not distinguish between their minister and their owner; therefore, when I was first introduced among them, they came up in a body, and in their way showed me the greatest mark of their respect; at the same time they made very heavy complaints that they were severely beaten, overburdened with work, kept very short of food, and that they and their children were very bare of clothes. They said if I would be a good master, they would be good negroes. I gave them to understand that I had no right in them, that I should be their sincere friend and minister, and would do every thing in my power to make them happy.

The following Lord's day, I went up for the first time to introduce divine worship among them; but it is impossible to describe the scene, nor can any person, a stranger to it, conceive of it. Mr. Bolton, my host, bore me company to give me countenance, and to assist me to sing. Two or three overseers from the neighbouring plantations, with the person in the same capacity on the spot, men of a similar cast with the Smithfield drovers, were all the white people I had present. Some negroes from the neighbouring plantations came, and I opened with as plain an exhortation as I possibly could, but felt it was like shooting darts against a stone wall. I prayed, read the lessons for the day, and used a very small part of the liturgy, namely, the confession of the Lord's prayer and the creed, but the greatest part of my poor congregation were either asleep, or making some of their figures upon the wainscot, or playing with their fingers, or eating potatoes, or talking with each other. This was very discouraging, but I thought I must get through it as well as I could.—My intended plan was, if I had settled with them, to have attempted to make them rational in order to make them capable of understanding my addresses, and to have began with them as with children, teaching them the alphabet. I hoped to have succeeded; and to carry my point, especially with the children, and that I might expedite the work, I intended to have procured negroes, by qualifying of whom, I might have been assisted in promoting general instruction. But knowing I must come home for ordination, and my house not being ready for me, I could only design the plan without putting it forward till after my return.

There were several in Savannah, whom I had learnt to read a little, and on three plantations beside my own, I taught Dr. Watts's first catechism and psalmody with some degree of success. My black congregations on two of the plantations (Mr. Jonathan Briand, being a dissenter from the episcopal church, objected to the use of a form of prayer,) could with a degree of readiness repeat with me the Lord's prayer, the creed, and the magnificat.

Once a week I preached to a small congregation, about twelve miles from Savannah; and on my own plantation I was soon joined by ten or twelve white people, to whom I accommodated my discourse, after I had done with the negroes. But so strong were the prejudices of the people in general against me, for being what they called a negro-parson, that I believe if I had been an angel of light, I should not have been esteemed.*

Upon my first coming into the province, I was informed it would prove to my advantage, if I could be on good terms with Mr. Frink, the rector of Savannah, and I was desired to seek intimacy with him, though he should treat me roughly and even repulse me.

I therefore paid him the compliment of asking his permission to speak publicly to the negroes in town; he gave it in a faint manner; and finding that a recommendatory letter from him to the bishop would be requisite for my obtaining ordination, I sought such an acquaintance with him, as my friends judged necessary.—On New-year's day, I sent him a very neatly bound volume of Mr. Hawies's sermons, for a New-year's gift, with a letter, intimating that my sentiments might be gathered from the work, and that it contained a just plan of the doctrines I intended to

* What a view is here incidentally given us of the degraded and despised state of this class of our *fellow-creatures*, if prejudice and pride will forsooth allow us to call them so.—Torn from their native country—oppressed by merciless exactions—treated like beasts that perish—fed and valued only for the purposes of labour and drudgery—a man turned into ridicule and scorn for wishing to teach them the Gospel—their possessors afraid lest one ray of light should enter their minds, and make them feel they were men!—Who can but lament that our country should so long have "Traded in the persons of men."—Who can but rejoice that the voice of justice and humanity was at last heard—who can but be grateful to those who "Through evil and good report" persevered till their discouraged efforts were crowned with success?

preach. He received them politely, gave me access to him, engaged me to bury the dead for him when he was indisposed, and I believe would have been glad to have served me, if previous to my embarkation from England, he not laid the foundation of my disappointment, as will appear in the sequel.

I visited the Orphan-house as often as possible, and was in perfect love and harmony with the family. Death made a sad inroad among them in a very little time: but the affliction was completed by the death of Mr. Whitefield. He had left Georgia to go on his northern tour, the latter end of April; and while his return was anticipated and supposed to be near, his removal was announced. It was opened to me by Mr. Habersham, who was much affected with it. It may be supposed I could not be insensible. As soon as I heard it, I retreated to pray, and pour out my soul to God. I can truly say the cause of God at large lay near my heart, and I had a persuasion that the work over which he had presided would not die with him. In his own mind he had fully settled me; his interview with the trustees of Mr. Zububuhler had led to some remarks respecting the encouragement of the laity in the service of the church, which he supposed would produce effect. He made me feel, by saying, when we parted, "Now I cast you off, sink or swim." Though his conversation afterwards was to me a conviction, he would have been glad to have had me again in his boat. His temper had been very placid ever since he left England; at the Orphan-house he seemed quite in his element. He conversed freely upon the future disposal of it. I told him I thought he should resign it to the government of the province, giving it as my reason, that though lady Huntingdon should have it in case of his death, she would not be able to preserve the life of religion in it, as he supposed. I observed that the work of God usually goes on in a way contrary to the order prescribed by man. He had taken such steps as certainly raised the expectation of the governor and council. They had reason to think it would be an institution under their direction. He was much too sanguine in his hopes of what was to arise from it.

I continued in one steady track, desirous to be fully qualified for my office, and vigorously to enter upon it in its full extent, which I could not without episcopal ordination. I indulged the idea of a speedy return to England, and consulted Mr. Habersham upon the expediency of it. He and all with whom he consulted upon the subject, saw it in the same light. For what end I was permitted to go to America, and why prevented from settling there, is among the secrets of the Almighty. He directs our ways and orders our steps. It is not for us to demand the reason of his conduct, but to submit to his will. May we ever restrain improper inquiries, and submissively yield ourselves up to him, as instruments to be used or to be neglected as he thinks good. I rejoice that your feet are set in such a large place, and that you have such a spacious field to labour in. That you may bring forth an abundance of fruit unto God, is the prayer of, my very dear friend, yours, &c.

LETTER XI.

My very dear friend,—You have no conception of the effect of Mr. Whitefield's death upon the inhabitants of the province of Georgia. All the black cloth in the stores was bought up; the pulpit and desks of the church, the branches, the organ loft, the pews of the governor and council were covered with black. The governor and council in deep mourning convened at the state-house, and went in procession to church, and were received by the organ playing a funeral dirge. Two funeral sermons were preached, one by Mr. Ellington, which I was desired to compose; the other was preached by Mr. Zubly. All the respect showed to his memory at his death, kept my sensibility alive. Though I was now a stranger in a strange land, I had my mercies; I gained the esteem of many who wished to see me in orders. I perceived I was in the land of mortality. Many by the stroke of death fell on my right hand and on my left; I, myself, and one of the passengers who came over with us, fell sick at the same time. Mine was but a slight sickness, his terminated in death, and an awful death it was; it discovered him to be a bad man in every respect: and what made it the more affecting, his wife and three children arrived from England just time enough to see his corpse before it was put into the grave. To meet her at the vessel, and to open to her the circumstances of his death, as well as to bury him, was the province assigned me.

Though I saw no sign of longevity either in natives or foreigners, my heart was set upon doing the best I could for the poor negroes, so that I gave no hint in any of my letters, of the badness of the climate for an English constitution. Rather I laboured hard to get a dear friend to partake with me in the comforts and crosses of my situation. I had settled it in my own mind in submission to the will of God, that I would, being put into a capacity for usefulness, live and die in Georgia, a devoted servant of servants. When the twelve months of my residence were nearly expired, it was agreed upon by Mr. Zububuhler's executors, that I should return home to the bishop for orders; and it was judged the more necessary at that time, as there was a strong suspicion of a Spanish war breaking out, which would make the pas-

sage to England to be attended with hazard and difficulty.

At a meeting of the trustees upon the occasion of my coming home, they wrote to the different persons hereafter named, in the order and manner following:

The Executors of the Rev. Mr. Zububuhler's Letter to Governor Wright.

"May it please your excellency,—We, the subscribers, executors, and trustees of the last will and testament of the late Rev. Mr. Zububuhler, having, agreeable to the said will, employed Mr. Cornelius Winter as a catechist to instruct the negroes on the plantation of the deceased, for a year past, and he having given us entire satisfaction, in the discharge of his duty, and behaved irreproachably in all respects in his religious and moral character, beg leave to recommend him to your Excellency as a person, in our opinion, properly qualified to receive holy orders; and therefore we request your Excellency will be pleased to recommend him to the lord bishop of London for ordination, that he may thereby be enabled fully to comply with the intention of the testator, by performing the ministerial offices required by his will. We are, with great respect, your Excellency's most obedient servants,

"FRANCIS HARRIS,
JAMES READ,
JOHN SMITH,
JOSEPH CLAY,
NOBLE WILLIAM JONES.

"*Savannah, Georgia, Nov.* 22, 1770."

The Executors of the late Rev. Bartholomew Zububuhler to the Rev. Samuel Frink.

"Reverend sir,—As we find it necessary, in compliance with the will of the late Rev. Mr. Zububuhler, your worthy predecessor, to have a person properly qualified to perform ministerial offices, and instruct the negroes on the deceased's plantation, in the principles of the Christian religion, as established by law in the church of England; and as we have employed Mr. Cornelius Winter as a catechist for a year past on the said plantation, and have had full proof of his abilities and fidelity, in daily discharging his duty; and as we also suppose you cannot be unacquainted with his religious and moral character, which we apprehend has been irreproachable, we can make no doubt, reverend sir, but you will readily join us in recommending Mr. Winter to the lord bishop of London, for holy orders, by which he will be enabled fully to comply with the intention of the testator's will.—We are, reverend sir, your humble servants, &c.

"*Savannah, Nov.* 22, 1770."

His Excellency the governor, and Mr. Frink the rector, received me very politely upon the occasion, and assured me they would write in my behalf to the bishop of London; accordingly they both wrote by me, but I was a stranger to the contents of their letters. To strengthen their testimonial, and prevent every obstacle, President Habersham wrote to the Rev. Mr. Broughton, rector of Allhallows, Lombard-street, and secretary to the society for propagation of the gospel in foreign parts, as follows, in hopes, if necessary, that he would show it to the bishop:

"Reverend sir,—Upwards of thirty-three years ago, when you were minister of the church in the Tower of London, I was honoured with your acquaintance, and, as I suppose you have not forgotten me, I shall make no farther apology for troubling you with this.—The worthy rector of this parish, the Rev. Mr. Bartholomew Zububuhler, deceased, having, by will, left great part of his estate in trust, for the support of a person properly qualified to instruct his negroes, on his plantation in particular, and others occasionally, in the principles of the Christian religion as established in the church of England; and the bearer, Mr. Cornelius Winter, having been recommended to the trustees as a serious and judicious person, and every way fit to execute the pious intention of the deceased, they have for a year past employed him in this service, in which he hath given them entire satisfaction, having conducted himself in the difficult undertaking with great prudence, assiduity, and discretion; not only with respect to the people under his charge, but wherever he has had an opportunity of giving a word of advice to the poor blacks on other plantations; and I thank God he has found some persons of considerable property, who have gladly opened their houses to him, thankfully accepted and countenanced his services, by attending themselves on the very sensible and affectionate exhortations he has given their numerous slaves.

"It is to me unaccountable that any people calling themselves Christians, should have any objection against having their servants instructed, unless it is their inattention to, and ignorance of the eternal importance of the Christian revelation. But it is a melancholy truth that there are too many such; and for this reason as well as many others, that might be mentioned, it is necessary that the person employed in this service should be ordained; because, however little regard some people pay to the pious instructions of a minister, there are, I hope, but few, if any, so abandoned, as not to show some respect to his sacred character, especially, if his life and conversation is conformable thereto.

"Mr. Winter, I understand, has long been desirous of being useful in the church, and

nas taken no small pains to qualify himself for that purpose; but finds he cannot be so useful in his present contracted situation, as he wishes to be. And as the executors and trustees of the late Mr. Zubuhler's will, think, by the tenor of it, and I am of their opinion, that the person who should instruct his negroes, should be a minister of the church of England, and consequently qualified to baptize, and perform other holy offices; they have requested his Excellency the governor, to recommend him to the lord bishop of London for holy orders; and I am informed they have desired the same of our present rector, the Rev. Samuel Frink, and both of them I believe will readily do it.—He is sufficiently provided for, and will want no farther assistance, being by the executors allowed £125 per annum, besides his board, a servant, &c.

"I have had opportunity of knowing him in his private conduct, and do think him to be a truly serious man; and believe he has engaged in instructing these much neglected and benighted people with an honest view to promote their eternal welfare, and the glory of God, by bringing them from a real state of heathenism to the light of the glorious gospel of the Son of God. I have long wished that some good man would undertake this truly charitable, though arduous work, and must say, that I think Mr. Winter peculiarly qualified for it. He appears to be very condescending and patient, is of a remarkable humble and quiet disposition, and from my own knowledge, will stoop to the barren, because too generally unimproved capacities of these poor creatures; I say unimproved capacities, as some ignorant people would foolishly insinuate that they are scarcely reasonable beings, and not capable of being instructed in the divine truths of Christianity, an absurdity too obvious to deserve any refutation; and I am ashamed to have occasion to make this observation, as daily experience evinces that there are many ingenious mechanics among them; and as far as they have had opportuntty of being instructed, have discovered as good abilities as usually are found among people of our own colour; but making them good tradesmen is immediately profitable, and the reward of making them good Christians is at a distance. I have been in many of the northern provinces, and have with great pleasure seen many serious negroes, and in the neighbouring province of South Carolina, I have known several who have honoured the gospel, perhaps not less than their owners; and we have had some, though but few, here, who are baptized and admitted to other holy ordinances, whose behaviour is the most irreproachable.—I have heard Mr. Winter speak to a considerable number of negroes in this town, as well as at my own plantation, where I have two hundred men, women, and children, with great

judgment, and Christian affection; and have seen such apparent marks of decency and attention among them, that had you, reverend sir, been present, I am sure you could not help bearing a part in their sensibility, and of thanking God for so useful a man; and if I am a judge, I think he has real abilities, and such as would not be despised in any congregation.

"I hope, therefore, to have the satisfaction of seeing him return to us in holy orders, by which his sphere of usefulness will be more enlarged; and as I before observed, he will by that means be more acceptable among the white people, he will be much more so among the blacks, who are in this particular, influenced by example. For my part, I am not ashamed to say, I have done, and will do all in my power to forward and promote this laudable design; and am happy in the prospect of one day seeing a congregated church of Africans rejoicing in their being brought from a land of darkness, and of being made partakers of our common salvation, to which both bond and free are equally entitled; and as I am persuaded, reverend sir, that you will rejoice in having an opportunity to promote the welfare of the meanest of our fellow-beings, I take the liberty of recommending the deplorable state of these poor neglected negroes to your friendship, as well as the bearer, who is desirous of serving them; not doubting but he will be countenanced by the reverend fathers of our church, and duly qualified to proceed in his good undertaking, which had been so warmly and affectionately recommended by them in their annual sermons preached before the worthy society for the propagation of the gospel: and I am so convinced of the uprightness of Mr. Winter's intention, that I am persuaded he will neither dishonour you, nor reverend and dear sir, your affectionate friend, and servant,

"JAMES HABERSHAM.

"*Savannah, Georgia, Dec.* 1, 1770."

Another letter, equally strong, to the same purport, was written to John Knox, Esq. secretary to lord Hillsborough, and a fourth, as follows, to the bishop of London:

"My lord,—The Rev. Bartholomew Zubuhler, deceased, the late worthy rector of this parish, having by his will left the chief part of his estate in trust to us, his trustees and executors, for pious uses, and in particular for the support of a person properly qualified to instruct his negroes on his plantation, in the principles of the Christian religion, as by law established in the church of England, we have, for about a year past, employed the bearer, Mr. Cornelius Winter, in this service; which, as far as his present limited capacity permitted, he hath faithfully executed with prudence and discretion. But as it appears

by the general design of the deceased, that the testator intended such a person should be a minister, and thereby qualified to baptize and perform all other holy offices, agreeable to the rubrick of the church of England; and the bearer having manifested a hearty disposition to propagate the gospel among these poor ignorant people in particular, and we can from our own knowledge confide in him to execute this trust, we humbly beg leave to recommend him to your lordship for holy orders, not doubting but he will give your lordship and us full satisfaction by his diligence and fidelity in executing the (not to every one,) acceptable service.

"Mr. Winter, who we presume does not want abilities, we understand has been long desirous of devoting his service to promote the interests of religion, as well among bond as free, in the established church, and to encourage him to proceed in so benevolent and charitable a work, we suppose we have sufficiently provided for him, having had hitherto a stipend of £125 sterling, per annum, besides his board, a servant, and other conveniences, which we shall continue to him. We have taken the liberty to request his excellency the governor, as also our present rector, the Rev. Samuel Frink, to recommend Mr. Winter to your lordship for ordination. The latter, in particular, has been acquainted with his behaviour here, which we believe has been unblameable, and we make no doubt but his future conduct will recommend him to your lordship's countenance and protection.

"That your lordship may long live to promote the interest of our excellent church, especially in this province, at present so deplorably destitute of ministers of God's holy word and sacraments, and, after a life full of days, that you may receive your reward from the great Shepherd of souls, is the hearty prayer of, your lordship's dutiful and most obedient servants, &c.

"*Savannah, in Georgia, Nov.* 22, 1770."

Thus laden with recommendations, I prepared to embark for England. I cannot say I was frothed with expectation of success, having been informed by a busy man, from whom I sought no information, though he often gave it, that Mr. Frink had written largely about me to the society for propagating the gospel, through the medium of which all business pertaining to religion was at that time usually transacted in America. After visiting the different places, and people who partook of my labours, and with whom it was supposed my intimacy was to be continued, I embarked on board the Georgia packet, Captain Anderson, about the middle of December. Several of the negroes seemed much affected at my leaving them, as did also the white people, particularly the family of Mr. Bolton with whom I lodged; and at parting I found, notwithstanding all the opposition I had met with, Georgia had its attractions. The passengers came on board the packet on the Friday, and we set sail on the Lord's-day. I offered to be chaplain to the packet, the offer was accepted, but being seized with sea sickness it was some days before I could engage in devotional exercises. As soon as it was in my power I kept up the exercise of morning and evening prayer as regularly as the weather would admit, and preached or read a sermon on the Lord's-day.

For a considerable time I was a restraint upon the company. Many efforts were used to break it; and when the poor captain had disguised himself in liquor, he discovered a manifest prejudice against me. To prevent mischief I retreated to my cabin on the evening of the 26th of December, when the weather became very foul, and the night tremendous. I do not pretend to give an exact marine description of it, neither do I mention it to give this narrative great consequence. Every sailor expected it would have been a fatal night. The captain said he never was in such a storm before; and he attributed our salvation to the soundness and good condition of the vessel. That which added to our distress was, there were very few working hands on board. Some had deserted her at Savannah, others had died there, and it was with difficulty any fresh ones could be engaged in the service, owing to the rumour of a Spanish war having broken out. Not only was the vessel three men short of her usual complement, but some of the crew fell sick after we had sailed, of which number was the mate. Knowing that it was imprudent to be alarmed upon every occasion, I went to bed about ten o'clock, as did the rest of the passengers, and the captain, who was drunk. My cabin being in the gangway, a situation I chose for the advantage of air, and more convenient retire ment, I was awakened by the sea breaking over the vessel, and coming into the cabin. I had resolved to compose myself, and lay some time in prayer, till finding no body move below, and hearing the language of distress above, I repeatedly, though unheard, called to somebody to put up the dead lights, suspecting that the sea would break through the cabin windows. Having been obliged to rise, through the repeated breaking of the sea, I went into the cabin, and found all fast asleep but a woman, who was lying in the greatest agony. I had not much difficulty to rouse them, and being soon sensible of their situation, they were roused indeed. The captain was filled with rage that he was not called before, and speedily went to work. The sails were no more to the wind than a sheet of paper; they were torn to pieces before they could be furled. The steward came down and put up the dead lights, and said there

was little hope of our surviving long. By the lightning, I saw the masts bend, and heard the men repeatedly say they would be carried away. By the good hand of God, the men were all preserved on board, though a great part of our live stock was washed away.

Not knowing but the hour of my departure was at hand, I threw myself upon my bed, and endeavoured to compose myself into a frame for examination and prayer. The situation was truly awful. My nature shuddered; but amidst all, I found my religious views profitable, and I could bless God for Jesus Christ, and an humble hope of interest in him. My chief concern was that I had Mr. Whitefield's will, and I felt sorry, that, by my being lost, his executors should be kept in suspense. However, on reflection, I thought it behoved me to have the more important object, eternity, uppermost; and I endeavoured to divert my mind from every thing else. Two of my fellow-passengers came to me crying, and lamenting their irreligious lives. They desired I would go to prayer, and one of them said if he survived this danger he would lead a different life to what he had done. The other was fearful of death, but did not discover any remarkable religious impression. My mouth was open to speak to them. Among other remarks, one I made was—that if we should be spared, they would equally want that mercy for which they then cried. I reminded them what is the only way and method of salvation, expatiated from their present feelings, upon the necessity of a religion that transforms the heart, and prepares us for all events. They were attentive hearers, and I believe, for once, heartily joined with me in prayer.

When all was done that was possible, the captain said we had but one chance, which was from the soundness of the bottom, and that we must now be left to the mercy of the sea. Poor man, he was ignorant of God who governed it. We prayed a second time together by joint consent, and the storm by degrees abated; with this our fears subsided, and our hopes revived. A very great swell continued for two days, in which time we could neither sail by the compass, nor get observation. By contrary winds we were kept out at sea much longer than the time in which the captain usually made his passage home. Hence he lost all his patience, and became very troublesome. The weather was frequently very bad, and he as frequently said, it was well we had sea room. So we found it when we came to land, being informed that great havock had been made among the shipping, at that time in the channel. I knew not at least whether I was more tired of my situation or my company; both were bad enough. By our loss of stock, our provision ran very short, and what remained was very poor. We made land the 30th of January 1771, with hopes of setting foot on shore in a little time.

As the prospect of distress in the late tempest wore away, my fellow-passengers lost their religious qualms, and broke out into expressions of impiety I had not heard before. When I found them deaf to reason I judged it my duty to be silent, and endeavoured in patience to possess my soul. I did not go to bed all the last night I was on board. I spent part of it in writing a letter to my thoughtless fellow-passengers. In it I frankly reminded them of our many mercies, of our great deliverance, and of their abuse of both. I reminded them of the uncertainty of life in the securest circumstances, and exhorted them to flee from the wrath to come.

On the 2d day of February, a boat came alongside the packet. I was the only one of the crew that went with her to the shore. As soon as I could get discharged from the custom-house, I retired to an inn, where I attempted to present my grateful acknowledgments to the God of my salvation, made a resignation of myself to his gracious disposal, and indulged myself in meditation. In the evening I attended preaching in Mr. Wesley's room, and found it good to be there; afterwards I retired to bed, and enjoyed a sweet sleep. When last at Dover, I was a forlorn character with no prospects before me, barely clad, and merely capable of getting conveyed from place to place. I now had the means of traveling comfortably. I vented my soul in a line to Mr. Peronet, of Canterbury, whose former kindness intitled him to the expression of my gratitude.—It is good to recall the history of life to mind, that we may be quickened to bless the Lord: I find pleasure in the review, and I feel this effect resulting from it. I bless God I have no disposition to deny his mercies, or to conceal his lovingkindness. May my heart never be the grave of forgetfulness, but the altar of praise. From thence may grateful incense rise in abundance! I give glory to God while I recite his goodness to you, who possess a great share of that affection, that makes it pleasant for me to subscribe myself, my very dear friend, yours, &c.

LETTER XII.

My very dear friend,—It is a part of the Christian's wisdom to enjoy his mercies, but to be cautious that he is not impeded by them in his progress. A voyage, or a journey, is an emblem of life, the end of which is to be regarded while we use the refreshments of the passage. I alighted at Dover, but was not to be detained a second day, since I had an opportunity to set off the next morning for London, whither I arrived safe in the evening. The first house held myself

bound to go to, was Mr. Keen's, woollen-draper, in the Minories, a principal friend of Mr. Whitefield's, and one of his executors. He gave me a most kind reception. After the first salutation, he said, he, and Mr. Hardy, and Mr. West, the other managers of Mr. Whitefield's concerns, had been but once sorry they let me go, and that had been ever since. Having delivered Mr. Whitefield's will to him, and spent some hours, he said he hoped I should make the Tabernacle-house my home. I signified it had the preference of all other places. The next day I had the pleasure to see my relations, now lovers and followers of that gospel they once despised. The letters I had received from them while abroad, prepared me for this agreeable sight, and our meeting was an emblem of that which I trust we shall have on the other side of Jordan, notwithstanding the strong efforts used by the enemy of souls to prevent it.

I knew my business required despatch, and I was desirous to know the issue. I therefore proceeded immediately upon it, and a very few days ended it. When my friends saw how well recommended I came home, they all seemed positive that I should succeed. Mr. Broughton, on reading Mr. Habersham's letter, made no doubt of it. He seemed pleased exceedingly with my recommendations, but want of courage in a good cause, and the pevalence of the fear of man, suffered him to subvert the design of his letter, for he never showed it to the bishop, though he was present at the society at Bow church, when my case was canvassed. I wish to make no reflection upon Mr. Broughton's pusillanimity. Providence saw fit, no doubt for wise ends, to frustrate my intention in America, by shutting up the bishop's heart against me, as will appear by a letter I wrote to the Rev. Mr. Zububuhler's executors, giving them an account of the whole process of the affair after my arrival, which was as follows:

"Gentlemen,—"While I possess much satisfaction upon a recollection of the prudence with which I have conducted myself since I arrived in England, and have commenced candidate for holy orders, it gives me pain on many accounts that I am obliged to inform you, that neither your strong recommendations, nor the use I have made of them, have been productive of their desired effect. There is a first cause for all the disappointments we meet with in life, and we should be reconciled to them.—One would have thought the great pains you have been put to, the character you have so kindly given me, the generosity you have shown me, together with the additional favour of his excellency's and Mr. Frink's recommendation to his lordship of London, for my admission into the establishment, were sure indications of success. —But all these have availed me nothing.

"That I may not leave you in the dark about the matter, I think it my duty to state the whole case to you as justly as possible, and then you will judge of the propriety of the conduct of the society, and of the bishop.

"At my arrival I waited upon Mr. Knox, who, after perusing Mr. Habersham's letter, was pleased to express his great approbation, and he directed me to Dr. Burton, to whom he desired I would signify the letter he had received, and ask directions how I should proceed. The doctor read that part of Mr. Zububuhler's will, that respects the instruction of negroes; he observed it was plain Mr. Zububuhler designed the gentleman employed should be in orders, but gave it as his advice, that as I wanted nothing from the society, I should immediately go to the bishop of London with the letters directed to him.

"The next morning I waited upon his lordship, who, after reading the testimonials, sent for me into his room. He said, 'You have been over to America as a preacher?' I answered, 'No, as a catechist.' 'But,' said his lordship, 'You have preached?' I replied, 'I have attempted to explain the Scriptures to the negroes, and some people's curiosity have excited them to hear;' to which he answered, 'It was illegal; you had no right to do so.' As I stood before his lordship as a candidate, and not as a causist to defend my conduct, I judged it prudent upon this, and some other remarks not very material, to be silent.

"The next question was, where was I educated? I answered, 'My lord, I have had no education, but what I have acquired by dint of industry.' His lordship proceeded to inquire where I was born, and to what I was brought up? I replied, I was born in London, served seven years' apprenticeship to a mechanic, and as soon as possible afterwards applied myself to the study of divinity. His lordship asked, 'Then how came you to go over to America?' To which I answered, 'On purpose to see if I could be of any service to the negroes.' 'Then,' said his lordship, 'you went over with Mr. Whitefield?' I replied, 'Yes, my lord.' He added, 'Then I suppose you have been connected with him?' I replied, 'My lord, I cannot with propriety say, I have been connected with any body else.' His lordship was pleased to commend me, in being, as he termed it, honest to him, in not leaving him in the dark, and directly added, 'Then to be sure you have drank deep into his sentiments?' To which I replied, 'I hope, my lord, I shall be enabled to give a degree of satisfaction upon examination.' He said, 'I hope you have not baptized children?' I replied, 'By no means; Mr. Frink promised me his assistance in the discharge of that office, till I should be authorized.' He then inquired if I had read Burnet upon the Articles. I replied I had, with other authors for

my instruction and information.—This was the purport of our conference, and I can make no very considerable mistake, as I minuted it down the very moment I left his lordship. He said he should do nothing for me of himself, that it was always usual for missionaries to apply to him through the society, that they should meet at Bow church, on the 15th instant, where I should be examined, and he should ordain the next week.

"From the manner in which his lordship dismissed me, though there was nothing kind in his deportment, for his look was severe, there was no softness in his manner, and he suffered me to stand all the time I was with him, I formed some expectation of success, and was in hopes I should meet with no impediment. But to my surprise, after waiting in Bow church till the society was nearly broken up, Dr. Burton sent for me into the vestry, and informed me, my business had been laid before the society, who agreed to have nothing to do with it, as there were no letters directed to them; neither could they recommend me to the bishop of London, as I wanted no assistance from them. I attempted a reply, but was frequently interrupted, being informed they could do nothing for me, and that it was concluded on, that Mr. Zubuhler's will did not require that the person employed on the estate should be a clergyman. How foreign was this both to the bishop's and doctor's former sentiment. Mr. Broughton, who had been present, waited for my coming out, and gave me some account both of his excellency's, and Mr. Frink's letter, each of which were expressive of my moral conduct. He also informed me, that the Archbishop of Canterbury with others, made some remarks which turned in the negative. However all agreed if his lordship of London were disposed to ordain me, they had no objection; but his lordship replied, he would have nothing to do with the American business but through the society; and he added, that he was afraid the young gentleman had drank deep into Mr. Whitefield's doctrine.

"I was very much concerned that Mr. Knox was not present at Bow church, till I waited upon him in the evening, when he gave for reason, that he knew it would be of no purpose, having met the committee the evening before, which consisted of the same body—that Dr. Young, bishop of Norwich, and several others, refused to see Mr. Habersham's letter, or to attend to the subject. Somebody informed them that the executors had spoken very disrespectful things of the society and their missionaries; and it was farther observed, the executors had no right to employ any person without the consent of the society. These, in general, are the things Mr. Knox related to me. I advised with him whether, as his lordship had not put a negative upon me personally, I should not wait upon him. Mr. Knox thought I should; and that I should write something, and send it to his lordship first, lest by sharpness of speech, he should prevent me from speaking my mind to him; accordingly, I retired to a friend's house, and wrote the following letter:

'My lord,—It has given me inexpressible pain to think that any misconduct or mistake, either in myself or the gentlemen intrusted with the affairs of the late Rev. Mr. Zubuhler, should prevent your approbation. My being ignorant of the assigned means to obtain so desirable an end, I hope will be an excuse in my favour, as it is strictly true, nor can I in any other way apologize for the honourable and worthy gentlemen in whose service I am embarked. I should rejoice in an opportunity to give your lordship the strongest proof of the uprightness and sincerity of my heart, actuated by no motive inferior to the glory of God, and the very miserable and benighted condition of those slaves, for whom no man can labour with a view to their spiritual interest, without suffering reproach. It is true when I first engaged in the undertaking, I was under no apprehension that this would be the concomitant of such an enterprise; but I have since learned by experience, that it is one mark among many given by the colonists, of their disapprobation of the instruction of their slaves. I would beg leave to observe to your lordship, that the 26th of last December was a day of so great distress as to render the annual return of it memorable to me, while memory will help me to recollect the works of the Lord, and his wonders in the deep. From the gloomy prospect then before my eyes, and the imminent danger the most skilful mariner on board our ship acknowledged we were in, there was little room to hope I should have had occasion to solicit your lordship's sanction. I am persuaded, if your lordship were acquainted with my principles, they would afford you all possible satisfaction; as I have, through divine mercy, derived them from that fountain from whence no impure stream can proceed, neither can vicious sentiments be found there.

'Encouraged by your lordship's patronage, I am once more willing to leave my dear country and friends, and venture across the Atlantic, suffer inclement weathers, and, as must be the case to be of real service to the negroes, many disagreeable inconveniences and much weariness, if by any means I may be instrumental of turning some of them from darkness to light. But, if I am denied what is the only apparent means to give me acceptance, I shall consider it the voice of Providence, directing me to take up my residence again in my native land, till I shall be called to enter the rest remaining for the people of God. I shall esteem it a very singular honour done me, to be favoured with your lordship's

countenance; and even though I should be denied, shall think myself under equal obligation to pray for your lordship's long life and increasing usefulness in the church, while I can subscribe myself, with submission, my lord, your lordship's most dutiful son, and obedient servant, &c.'

"After his lordship had perused the above letter, he sent for me into him, and said, 'I suppose you have heard what the society have concluded on?' I replied, 'My lord, I have; and as it is a matter entirely left to your lordship, I hope you will determine it in my favour.' But though I urged the necessity by repeated arguments, the only reply he made was, 'I can do nothing in it.' He observed, coincident with the society, the will did not require me to be ordained; and when I told him I could not think of returning in my present circumstances, he said, 'I must do as I please,' and withal added, 'Now Mr. Whitefield is dead, you want to throw yourself under our wing.' He said, they had an objection against ordaining any person brought up to business; and frequently repeated, that 'Every body might say they have a call to preach;' and that 'I had been a preacher with Mr. Whitefield, which was illegal.' To each of these I made a reply in submission to his lordship's judgment, but did not dwell upon them, remembering the circumstances in which I stood. At last he began to reflect very severely upon the executors, for sending to Mr. Whitefield for a missionary, in a manner that is not worth while to trouble you with a narration of, saying, 'The society has been used ill;' and concluded with these words, 'To be plain with you, Mr. Winter, we had information from America of your going over, long before you embarked from England, and had warning, even though you should return home, not to ordain you.'

"I think I have been as just and circumstantial in my account as I can. I wish the prolixity of it may not tire your patience. The most disagreeable part I have to act, in consequence of my disappointment, is the resignation of my poor charge according to my intention, which I hinted when I was favoured with a meeting among you: for though I have the spiritual welfare of the negroes much at heart, yet I could not think my labours would be employed solely among them; and the importunities of my numerous friends to stay at home, give me to know how much more acceptable I shall be among them, than among the very few in the province of Georgia, who will not dispense with my want of ordination.

"I bear upon my heart a very grateful sense of your generosity and kindness, in making me so exceedingly comfortable in my outward circumstances, and am sorry that by the necessity I am under to resign my charge, it has proved so fruitless an expence. I hope the Almighty of his infinite mercy, will raise up some person more capable of, and successful in the important work, than it has been in my power to be. Whoever have been my hinderance I freely forgive them, and pray God it may not be laid to their charge. There will be a day wherein all the upright in heart shall glory, and in that day, my motive for coming to Georgia will appear such as I shall not be ashamed of; nor will it then appear less evident, that my resignation is not the effect of a fickle and unstable mind.—Since my rejection, I have waited upon every gentleman who I judged had any interest, and among the rest, upon Dr. Franklin, who has engaged to use his exertions on my behalf with the associates of Dr. Bray, of which society he is a member. In about a month I shall be able to judge of his success, and shall be glad to convince the executors of the Rev. Mr. Zububuhler, of my good will to continue in their service, and in the interim I beg leave to subscribe myself, gentlemen, your very humble and obedient servant, &c.

"*London, February* 26, 1771."

Just as I shut the door on leaving the bishop, he called to me, which led me to think the scale was turned, but he only said, "When you return to America let me know:" to which I replied, "My lord, I cannot think of returning without ordination:" bowing his head, he said, "Very well; and thus we parted till the judgment day.—The thread of the narration requires that I should introduce Mr. Clay's answer to the above letter, which runs thus:

"Dear sir,—Your much esteemed favour of the 26th of February last, I have now before me for reply. I should have answered it sooner, but waited the arrival of Captain Anderson, who, I had some hopes, might probably have brought us some better news in regard to the success of your endeavours to obtain ordination, but I find to no purpose—God's will be done; he knows what is best for us, and will do it in that way that seemeth him best. Were I to say I am not extremely sorry for your disappointment on your own account, I should say a great untruth. I should have been very happy to have seen you in this land again, could you have come in a proper manner, I mean in orders: but as a friend I could not as matters have turned out, advise your returning here. There are many, very many, considering the number of our inhabitants, and some of those in authority, who rejoice exceedingly at your disappointment; and perhaps, if in their power, would render you all the ill offices they could. Indeed some of them, I am pretty sure, have been as industrious as possible already, to prejudice you all they could on this side, and glory in it. All this I know would be nothing

to you, if you could have any prospect before you of doing good to souls.

"As I before observed, I am really sorry for your disappointment—but I must be free to say it does not give me half so much uneasiness on your own account, as to see that a door is so shut against us. Unless God in his infinite mercy and goodness, uses some extra means in our favour, this land, I may say land of darkness and ignorance, (more particularly if applied relative to the people in the back woods, many of whom I dare say never saw a Bible in their lives, or ever heard a gospel sermon, and most of whom can neither write nor read,) must be left without teachers at least of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the true and only Saviour of sinners, unless we encourage those who are dissenters from the established church, which for my part I have not the least objection to, provided we cannot get others. But I must say that I think, if two men equally qualified for the ministry, the one of the established church, and the other a dissenter from the church, that the former would be more favourably received, I mean in this country; and for which reason, I would rather wish to see episcopal ministers among us.

"What can our dignitaries think, or really one would rather ask, do they think at all? One would imagine, if we were to judge on this side from those they generally send among us as ministers, that their only care was to see that they were not religious men. —It is surprising that there is not one among them, who would venture to ordain such persons as they should have reason to think would prove faithful teachers. This is, as I presume, for fear of the scoffs of their brethren. Much might be said upon this head, but perhaps it may be more prudent to be silent. A great part of your opposition at home, I am sure has been owing to letters from Mr. Frink, particularly so far as relates to the society. I remember at one of our meetings, after that we had received a letter from poor Mr. Whitefield, acquainting us, he had no prospect of getting a person in orders for Mr. Zubuhler's estate, some of the gentlemen said that Mr. Frink said, if we would give him leave, he would write to the society, and get us a proper person out immediately; to which reply was made, that we had specimens enough of ministers of their sending out, and that they (the society) would be the last people we should think of writing to; and I believe added, that a person with no other qualification than Mr. Frink himself, could by no means suit us: all this I dare say was immediately carried to him, and was what I suppose the society meant by our speaking ill of them. I understand they think they have a right to be consulted in regard to a catechist, for the parson's estate. They may think so, but it is a right we shall never allow them, nor shall we ever trouble them in any matter relative to it."

This was dated from Savannah, the 30th of June 1771, accompanied with one from Mr. Habersham, from which the following is an extract:

"Perhaps few of your friends think themselves more interested in your success, in getting ordination than myself, and I think I may also truly say, that few, if any, of your friends, have a higher esteem, or more real friendship for your person than I have, and therefore your disappointment has given me much concern, and I cannot help viewing it as a frown of divine Providence.

"I had raised my expectation of seeing a church of Africans, and had fixed on you as the instrument, under God, to bring it about, and hoped that you would have been the happy man, to have presented many of them to your Father, and to their Father, with a 'Here am I, and the children whom thou hast given me.' You know there are a few, and of no inconsiderable property, who would be glad to have their black servants become fellow-heirs with them, and partakers of the inheritance undefiled, and that fadeth not away. Is it then possible that the guardians and fathers of our excellent church should refuse orders to a man every way qualified, amply provided for, unexceptionable in his moral character, and heartily desirous from the best motive, the love of God, to engage in and promote so arduous, so painful, and difficult a work, as the conversion of those neglected and benighted people from, what shall I call it, prejudice or mistake? I could say more but I forbear, not doubting but God will vindicate his own cause. I have by this conveyance written to good lady Huntingdon, and have desired her to have some conversation with you on this subject, as you are circumstantially acquainted with the state and provision made for the mission here; and in case you do not see your way clear to return to us, a kind Providence may possibly point out some person properly qualified, agreeable to the will of the donor to succeed you, who I may venture to say, will be heartily received by those intrusted with the execution of it."

The review of these letters may seem tedious; but to any one who may think it worth while to acquaint themselves with the memoirs of a person who feels himself insignificant, it is presumed they will not appear altogether needless. As transcribed by my own pen, they may appear to savour of self-applause, but they are really inserted with no other view than to set forth a naked truth, as it relates to the ineffectualness of the methods pursued for my obtaining orders in the church. At this distance of time, in which I review the whole affair, not less than

a period of twenty-eight years, no other reflection should be indulged than what tends to excite a disposition to give glory to God. If we should not ascribe too much to men in a way of applause, as though they acted independent of God, neither should we be too severe in our censures, as though in that part of their conduct which seems reprehensible, they conducted themselves by their own power or wisdom. As the hearts of kings, so of other men are in the hands of the Lord. Of promotion, it is observed that it cometh neither from the east, nor from the west, nor from the south, but God is the judge. Though we may be disappointed, he is not defeated; all things are ordered according to the counsel of his own will. To the frustration of my hope, my venerable and dear friend, Mr. Berridge, refers in his letters, with a few sentences of which I cannot help making the conclusion of this. I give you also, though it relates not to my concern, his idea of the defeat of Mr. Whitefield's design, because of the singularity of the style and sentiment.

"It excites in me no surprise that the Orphan-house is burnt down. It was originally intended for orphans, and as such was a laudable design; but has ceased to be an Orphan-house, in order to become a lumber-house for human learning, and God has cast a brand of his displeasure upon it; but how gracious the Lord has been to Mr. Whitefield, in preserving it during his lifetime. We all love to lay plans, and you laid a very fair one last winter, but your Master has shown you he will not employ you as his counsellor.

"As to ordination, I can only say, pray and wait for a clear discovery of the Lord's mind. If you find an eagerness for it, suspect that eagerness as the produce of your own will; but if you are backward, and yet disposed to comply if it be the Lord's will, it looks well. Whatever I have undertaken with eagerness, has always miscarried; and what I have attempted with trembling, and some little reluctance, has generally succeeded.

"You had an eager desire to go to America, and it was a well-meant desire, but it does not seem to have been the Lord's mind. At length you had a passage to America, and it seemed a providential one, and you went with joy, but returned with sorrow and disappointment."

Perhaps good was done by going to America, of which I am not acquainted. With this conjecture I conclude this letter, and remain, my very dear friend, yours, &c.

LETTER XIII.

My very dear friend,—Goodness and mercy were exercised towards me in that very event, which appeared to be unfavourable. While I was in America, there was continual murmuring at the conduct of the British ministry. Yet little did I think a continental war was so near. I scarcely got my foot upon the English shore, before I found the resistance of the Americans to taxes the general topic; and had I succeeded in my endeavours, I must have experienced soon the horrors of war. But not immediately apprised of this, you may suppose the disappointment I met with was attended with a little shock. Though it produced some uneasy feelings, they were very inconsiderable, and over-balanced by the testimony of my conscience. I had used no shifts nor evasions to insinuate myself into his lordship's favour, judging them to be beneath the Christian. Some of my brethren have reflected upon me for trying, as they supposed, the whole bench to obtain ordination; but I never applied to any beside the bishop of St. Asaph, after the bishop of London refused me. The interview with the former was short, but favourable; he told me he would be my friend under the rose, but I did not wait upon him the second time. Some of the clergy in Dr. Bray's association, required, in order to my having their interest, that I should renounce my present sentiments; but Dr. Franklin, properly said he was persuaded I had too much honesty to do so; when he mentioned it to me, I told him I had no sentiment to renounce. A circumstance not unworthy of notice, is, that on going out, I landed in Charleston with two guineas in my pocket; and by making Mr. Whitefield a gratuitous present of half-a-dozen bottles of port wine, I was reduced to one pound four shillings. I acquitted myself properly in Georgia, and had some occasions to exercise humanity, and brought home twelve guineas.

Mr. Keen, who received me so cordially at my arrival home, was ever anxious to know the event of my applications to the bishops, and discovered a degree of pleasure when he found my prospect shut up. He frequently said in a way of pleasantry, "We will ordain you: you had better go down to Bristol and bury yourself for a month, and then return to your old office of reading prayers at the chapel." I replied, I knew I was called to preach the gospel, but did not know I was called to read prayers. He said they could have preachers enough. He asked me what I intended to do, I said, preach the gospel, "Where?" "In the whole world if called to it." The favour of kindness before this had abated. I gave offence by using a sheet of writing paper, and the paper case was locked up; and being asked if I could not get a lodging at my relation's, I took the question as an ejectment, and left my quarters.

In the order of divine Providence, there is a strange combination of circumstances, by which what is appointed is brought to pass.—

In the same year, died Mr. Whitefield, Mr. Howel Davies, the head of Calvinistical methodism in Pembrokeshire, and Mr. Adams, of Rodborough, the leader of the same cause in Gloucestershire and Wilts. Though the Tabernacle at Bristol was under Mr. Whitefield's auspices, yet strange to say, in his will he made not the least mention of it. The trustees in London offered to befriend it; but would not accept it as part of their charge. All was confusion there. The two considerable men then depended upon, were Messrs. Collet and Ireland. Preachers in that department were very scarce indeed. Mr. Croom, of Rodborough, much against his will, had been detained at Bristol twelve months. Pressing letters were sent to me, particularly by Mr. Ireland and Mr. Hogg, who also was a leading man in the Bristol and Gloucestershire cause, and by the death of Mr. Adams, became senior preacher in the connexion. A very earnest letter from the latter, which would be proper to insert here if I could recover it, was the means of diverting my attention from the bishop of St. Asaph.—Judging that in that letter, the voice of Providence was to be heard very loudly, I released myself from the inconveniences of my London situation, and re-entered upon my ministerial labours at Bristol. I was kindly received by all. I endeavoured to act the part of a moderator, in which I happily succeeded. But it proved I had here a cup to drink, not the most agreeable to flesh and blood. After I had indefatigably served the congregation for more than six months, upon terms very different from those of the gentlemen who now serve it, I was dismissed under many marks of unkindness.

A variety of occurrences turning up at this time, crowd in upon my mind.—It was the 8th of April 1771, that I went to Bristol, and in about three weeks after, my very happy acquaintance commenced with my dear and most highly esteemed friend, Mr. Rowland Hill. This has been one of the greatest mercies of my life. It is now more than twenty-eight years that I have enjoyed it. If the same degree of honesty and honour, had been in some pretended friendships, that I have proved in him, there had not been such diversity in these memoirs. From the Sabbath on which I had the pleasure to introduce him into the Tabernacle pulpit, has religion been reviving through his instrumentality, and the flame has burned strong ever since. Other instruments may have helped it, but it began with him. May his dear and valuable life be continued long after the hand that writes these lines is motionless.

He had come from the north, and it was practicable to detain him. He was then under the frowns of his family; by his devoted, and invariable attachment to the gospel, a distressed gentleman. I felt a peculiar attachment to him, and but from my constraint to the ministry, which I found I dare not relinquish, should, *pro tempore*, have made a voluntary offer of my humble services to him as an attendant. At this time also I became acquainted with Mr. Joseph Shipman, who was one of the six students expelled from Oxford. My acquaintance with him commenced from a very affecting letter he wrote the Bristol society, who had partook of his short labours in the decline of life. I spent much time with him, and found it very profitable. He wanted services I was enabled to render him, and I found my being with him opened a door of many mercies to me. One anecdote I cannot omit to communicate. I had no more at this time than, literally, daily bread. Not returning to America, I had no farther claim upon the plantation. My twelve guineas which I brought home were exhausted. My dying friend used to remind me, that I wanted a new suit of clothes: I replied, when I could pay for them I would have them. Neglected by the Tabernacle connexions, I was at liberty for any opening Providence might make to me. Itineracy seemed to be my lot; but I was neither equipped for such a life, nor had I ability to equip myself. Mr. Shipman, remarking that I wanted a horse, I said, if I run in debt for any thing, it must be for that. I had occasionally hired one, for which I was disposed to bargain; but when the bargain was made, I signified I had not money to pay for it, and thus became a debtor of ten pounds for a horse, which carried me more than six years. A party of gentry which was at Clifton, had heard of the pleasing frame of Mr. Shipman's mind, and was desirous of seeing and conversing with him. Captain, now Sir Charles Middleton,* was one of them, to whom I dedicated Mr. Shipman's funeral sermon; he came to the Tabernacle to hear me, repeatedly invited me to dine with the party, and the last time, previous to my going away, surprised me with a present of ten guineas. This I note as a kind interposition of divine Providence, though not the only one by very many since, whereby my wants have been supplied.—At this juncture it was, that my honoured and worthy friends, Mr. Powis, and Mr. Hill, now Sir Richard, gave me the honour of their friendship. My introduction was by Mr. Rowland Hill. By several annual visits to them, and intermediate interviews, my exhausted cruise was supplied. I always found in Mr. Powis's family, I was out of my sphere; but studied to make myself as agreeable as possible: and though my ministerial labours there, were attended with some peculiar difficulties to myself, they were in general useful to others. I visited the amiable widow

* Now lord Barham

of Mr. Powis, repeatedly after his death, and always found a kind reception. I frequently paid a visit to Everton and its environs, and found the venerable vicar ever disposed to be kind and affectionate. The late Mr. Thornton, who refused to give me any help in procuring orders, and reflected upon my having engaged in the curate's place, at Tottenham-court, became my warm and steady friend. He always promoted my exertions in the cause of God, was pleased at intelligence I could give him, and was free to communicate any that he thought I could use to advantage. He would sometimes invite me to London, and require from me the office of chaplain. By his munificence my wants have often been supplied, and I have also been enabled to relieve the wants of others.

In the spring of 1772, I first visited the society of Haverfordwest, and repeated my visits to that and the neighbouring congregations thrice, making a considerable stay each time. The requisite labours were hard, but they were amply rewarded by the influences attending them, and from the liberal disposition of the people; for spiritual things sown, ministers reaped carnal things in an abundance. Strange that some ministers should have returned from their Welch tour to talk about their crosses, the greatest of which must have been an intrusion upon their time; they could not have had a defect in their bed or board. In the years 1774 and 1775, I paid two visits to a destitute congregation at Lancaster. I introduced the gospel at Garstang, where I believe it continues established unto this day. Here I met with Mr. Winton, who has been many years, and is now, the minister of Exmouth, a Scotch youth, in humble life; I brought him off with me, and by one way and another, provided for him, and taught him. He was strictly an itinerant student. I took him a long circuit, brought him round to Lancaster again, and finding it inconvenient to continue him my companion in travel, I placed him under Mr. Titus Knight, of Halifax, from whence he was placed under lady Glenorchy's patronage. It was a bold, some would call it a presumptuous undertaking, but the Lord put an honour upon it. From Lancaster I proceeded to revisit Yorkshire, where I had laboured in 1768, particularly at Leeds and Halifax. I paid occasional visits to London, and was admitted to the Tabernacle pulpit. In Tottenham-court chapel I preached but once for many years, and was surprised at the largeness of the congregation. Mr. Keen, displeased at my rejection of his motion when the bishop refused me, carried his resentment, and some say—a person by me least suspected, heightened it, so that I was become an alien to my mother's children. My interference in a very critical business at Bristol, wherein the glory of God, and the credit of religion was very nearly concerned, created me a deal of expense and trouble, and exposed me to reflection. This respected a person held in the highest esteem by the religious and profane; a man who, though not in affluence, was allowed to rank with the polite, and was considered a gentleman. The circle of ministers, and Mr. Whitefield, Mr. Adams, and Mr. Kinsman particularly, never thought themselves happier in Bristol than when they were with him. He might be called the secretary of the Tabernacle, for he kept all the accounts. Not a flaw was in his character till the event referred to was discovered. He concealed it as long as he could—he divulged it to me, and I thought all to whom I mentioned it, would applaud my conduct, and with me fly to his help; but they left me under the burden I had adventurously taken, and forsook the man in his distress, they had honoured in his prosperity. To this conduct, Messrs. Roquet, Hill, and Grove, are exceptions. They stood forth, they eventually rescued; and their attention to the same person proved, that it was not imprudent in me to sympathise with a character who, if he had possessed an overgrown fortune, would have shone with it.

Gloucestershire and Wilts were the circle in which I more commonly moved. Wotton-underedge and Frampton, were, by Mr. Hill's instrumentality, added to the cause.—No stipend was connected with my labours, and the occasional gratuities I received, were too inconsiderable to admit of my commanding a purse. I felt the importance of a place to retire in, and groaned under the want of improvement. My efforts were frequently discovered, and as frequently reproached by the enemies of literature; and our connexions abounded with too many, who made little discrimination between study and sin. I furnished a room in the cottage at Christian-malford, in Wilts, adjoining a malt-house which had been converted into a preaching place, of which I was extremely fond, and where I had an inclination to live and die. For this room I paid rent; here I collected my little library and papers, resorted to it as often, and staid as long as I could, but as I paid for all I had, and my purse contained shillings rather than guineas, I could not continue there long at a time. It being unto me whenever I could get there, an heaven upon earth; it may be supposed I left it with reluctance. I used to tell my honoured friends in Shropshire, that if in a day's time I could be transported from their mansion to that cot, I should not, with the common fare of a small piece of bacon, in a large dish of greens, miss the elegancies of the preceding day's table.

Every now and then my inclination to be ordained revived; hints given me in Shropshire, encouraged it. The Rev. Mr. Stillingfleet's influence, and his disposition towards me, for I occasionally preached in his house,

prompted it; but I doubted if it were my duty to be silent, and by that time I had accidentally laid hold of Dr. Wilton upon Subscription, and Toogood's Answer to White; both of which, with other writers upon the subject, I read with attention, and my attention by these authors was directed to things which I never saw before. An instance of the force of episcopal prejudice I must not omit here. I went to breakfast with Mr. Hitchen, one morning after my return from America. In the course of conversation, he asked me what I intended to do. I told him to get orders, if I could. He said, "I love a clergyman to my heart, and have had a great desire to go into the church; but, (stretching out his hand, and laying hold of a flat volume which contained the Canons and Articles,) these always prevent me." He referred to some particulars, and made his remarks; when I left him, the conflict between prejudice and conviction was so powerful, that it made me ill; and, though so early in the day, I was obliged to retire to bed. Better informed upon the subject now, than I had formerly been, my mind became settled; and I determined if once I received ordination among the Dissenters of any description, never to invalidate it by submitting to any other. Though to be the pastor of a particular flock, was congenial to my turn of mind, yet the strength of affection to my methodistical circle would not admit of my deserting it. I wanted to be more effectually useful among them. The want of the ordinances of baptism and the Lord's-supper, being regularly administered, was a manifest disadvantage to the work. Mr. Hill saw it and lamented it, and proposed my receiving ordination. I was to be ordained to the three societies of Castle-combe, Christian-malford, and Chippenham, in Wilts. Though these were to be my more immediate charge, it was designed that I should continue my visits to the congregations in Gloucestershire, in connexion with my brethren, Messrs. Hill, Hogg, Croom, and Vines. The motion was accepted. It may serve as a sufficient apology for my having been a pluralist, that I had no stipend, but lived upon Providence, and was ignorant from what quarter my resources were to come. The poverty of the people not only prevented them from helping me, but rendered it necessary, that I, out of my uncertain quota, should help them.—The day set apart for the solemnity of ordination, was October the 2d, 1777. The persons engaging in the work of the day, were Mr. Joss, of London; Mr. Williams, of Stevancy, in Monmouthshire; and Mr. Clark, of Trowbridge. It was performed at my little Bethel, at Christian-malford, and it proved a blessed day. It was honoured by the conversion of a whole family; the parents died in faith, and the children are now walking in the truth. Mr. Clark opened with an exposition of the 34th of Ezekiel, from the first to the eleventh verse, and 1 Peter v. from the first to the fourth verse. He asked me such questions as were suitable, and required me to give the confession of my faith. After prefacing with such observations and apology, as circumstances rendered necessary, I delivered it. The three ministers satisfied with it, then proceeded with prayer and imposition of hands to set me apart; the prayer was offered up by Mr. Williams, who afterwards proceeded to deliver the charge from 2 Tim. ii. 1. This was followed by a sermon from Mr. Joss to the people, from I Thess. v. 12. The whole service continued five hours; but was so far from being thought tedious by the congregation, that numbers acknowledged they were strangers to every unpleasant feeling. My own soul was truly solemn, and I was so affected when I engaged in my part, that my speech was sometimes interrupted, and often broken. I engaged to take part of all the trials as well as all the comforts of the people, I then was devoted to serve more immediately.

It was attended by a very considerable number of people. I suspected that many of the neighbours would have scoffed through prejudice; but on the contrary, all behaved with the strictest decency, and numbers were in tears. I was suspicious some of my church friends would have been offended, but met with no instance of reflection: on the contrary, several expressed their approbation. One in a note, said, "I can only attend in spirit, and by prayer at the throne of grace; and hope the Lord will manifest his gracious presence in a powerful manner to the hearts of those that attend, and renew your mission to a lost world."

One of the most regular clergymen sent me the following short letter, which I received the very morning I was ordained.

"My dear friend,—Our friends at Trowbridge have informed us that you are upon the point of receiving ordination as a Dissenting minister. I trust you will experience the blessing and presence of the Lord Jesus Christ, the great bishop of our souls, on this and every other occasion, and that you will find this sanction useful to you in your ministerial employment. An external designation, though not necessary to the being of a preacher of the gospel, is, where it may be had, ordinarily expedient to the regular ministration of the church of Christ. May we be enabled to preserve in all things, the happy medium between resting in outward things, and despising those institutions, which the church of Christ has ever approved."

None ever approved more of the order, the gospel requires than, my very dear friend, yours, &c.

LETTER XIV.

My dear friend,—It might be supposed that my ordination had been the consequence of a disposition in the people to meet my wishes; and that they intended to assist me with what was necessary for the supply of my wants, that I might be enabled to serve them as faithfully, as I was disposed to serve them affectionately. But it was rather subservient to the advantage of others than materially useful to those, for whose benefit it was primarily designed. The issue of it, and the subsequent providence of God towards me, which has been wise and good, comes to be opened to you.

I was allowed to bear all the expense of the ordination myself. The day after the service, I found my spirits much fatigued and very languid. After my friends left me, I betook myself to solemn retirement, which I spent in recollection and examination. The retirement was as heaven to me, as much as earth would admit of; the pleasures of it were only damped by a conviction it must often be interrupted; for supposing I could have kept in the circuit, the accommodations of the other two places, Chippenham and Castle-combe, were not equally comfortable, as they were unfavourable to the share of solitude I required for study. I might have been discouraged with the thought, that my purse did not produce subsistence for a month. But I made the best of the hour, and set my mind to such meditation as was suited to the ensuing Sabbath. Philippians iv. 1. opened readily and widely to me, and I went into the pulpit with the words in my mouth, and with the weight and importance of them in my heart. Wherever I cast my eye, I thought I saw my brother, my sister, and my mother. The ordinance of the sacred supper, which I afterwards administered, was attended with some favourable tokens, that he, who graciously appointed it, was present. I proceeded to move conscientiously in the circuit, and to divide to each department of the household of faith, their portion of meat in due season. A proper regard was paid to the favourite object, itineracy, which I had been given to understand, must on no consideration be dropped, and that the brethren in Gloucestershire might come into my district, I readily went into theirs. But I soon found the ordination had given umbrage; and though I endeavoured to explain the design of it to be as a fence against intrusion into the ministry, as of long establishment, in the christian church, attended with evident marks of divine approbation, and suited to the well organization of christian society; it was considered in a different light, rather subversive of the spirit of godliness, than conducive to real good. One of the preachers was a Baptist, and he had privately diffused his notions, with some success; a consequence was, that my baptizing infants, though I performed the ordinance with great tenderness to those of opposite sentiment, gave offence, and the offended absconded from my ministry. Without assigning the reason, they first deserted the ordinance of the Lord's-supper, and afterwards the preaching. How many are there, who, over-heated with party-zeal, omit to cultivate the meekness and gentleness of Christ, and deny to others the claim they make for themselves—the claim of private judgment; and instead of living in the exercise of christian charity, are cherishing animosity. Such persons read their Bible with a blind partiality, and they are not to be won by the most courteous deportment. It gives them a kind of diabolical pleasure to know, that they grieve the spirit of the man against whom they set themselves.—In hopes that I might see better days, I continued to bear with their weakness who were reprehensible, giving place to the services of my brethren, to whom my opponents were more partial.

At Castle-combe and Chippenham, I met with more civility; but little disposition to render my life comfortable, or to conform to the order I endeavoured to establish among them. At Rodborough, Dursley, Wotton-under-edge, and Frampton, in Gloucestershire, my visits were acceptable and useful. Every one of these places was a field for much action. In each place, I administered the ordinance of the Lord's-supper, as often as the several societies judged it necessary, or found it convenient to receive it. I grasped at retirement as I could catch it; but was often intruded upon, and the nature of my studies being discovered, subjected me to much reflection. I should have been much more acceptable to some descriptions of our friends, if, instead of endeavouring to acquaint myself with science and language, I had indulged long conversation upon what amounted to nothing; and instead of spending a few minutes had wasted many hours. I now and then, but seldom, saw London; and always had access to the Tabernacle pulpit when there; nor was the Tabernacle pulpit at Bristol shut against me, but no invitations were given to me, as to others, to supply it. As often as possible I returned to my little apartment, at Christian-malford, but while, notwithstanding the hard measures I received from some of its leading members, I enjoyed it in preference to every place upon the globe, it was not possible, for want of subsistence, that I should continue there more than a few days at a time, and then my hours were divided between the other two congregations. The malcontents continued to stand aloof, and I felt it very unpleasant to labour under the disesteem of a people who had received the fullest proof of my attachment to them.

Though I had been often grieved, and was much neglected by several of the leading people in the Methodist congregations, my affections were far from being alienated. My method of preaching was found fault with, as too orderly and exact; yet it always was attended by audiences respectable for number. Could I have moved regularly, and have commanded necessary retirement, I might have put up with a variety of inconveniences; but I often took very long and unnecessary journeys; and the plans, usually settled at Rodborough, on the first Wednesday in the month, were often innovated. I was now entered into the thirty-fourth year of my age, and while on a review of the last twelve years, I had reason to be thankful for an evidence of God's gracious acceptance of my very imperfect services, and for the instances I met with of their having been useful, I had cause to be humble, and could not help feeling myself shocked on conviction, that I had, though unavoidably, neglected necessary pursuits. I considered that I was now in the meridian of life. My confidence in my present connexions began to weaken, and I felt much inclined, if Providence should admit, to become a resident minister.

On conversing with Mr. Sloper, of Devizes, with whom I had commenced a very steady friendship, which had stood with increasing affection, for more than three years, he referred me to Marlborough, and encouraged me to make it an object of attention. I was struck with it, as being contiguous to my friends, with whom, notwithstanding hard measures received, I wished to continue in the bonds of friendship, and judged it would be a situation favourable to frequent interviews. Accordingly I made myself acquainted with the people, preached probationary sermons, and being accepted by the universal consent of the people, I commenced the relation of pastor to the church, which had been organized by the judicious direction of one of the senior professors, who had seen religion in that town pass under various revolutions.

As soon as I could see the probability of my being connected with the congregation at Marlborough, I communicated my intention of withdrawing from Christian-malford, and its connexions—the several congregations in Gloucestershire. The intelligence was not very pleasing. I observed it was a resolution from necessity, and for convenience; and that it was my wish to testify the continuance of my affection, by visiting them as often as I could, and by making an exchange with their ministers, as opportunity offered. My most highly esteemed friend, Mr. Hill, was not pleased by the event, but I presume he saw the propriety of it. He introduced me to my new charge, February the 2d, 1778, expressing himself very warmly in my favour, and the next morning he left me to prove the justice of all he had said.

As soon as he departed, my soul was filled with much distress, and an unusual gloom overspread me. I began to suspect the propriety of my conduct, and to be apprehensive that I had stepped out of the path of Providence. I retired to prostrate myself before the Lord, and entreated him not to forsake me. In the exercise of prayer I found relief; had a token for good from whence I could conclude, I should not be left in my new situation comfortless, nor useless. Hitherto the Lord had brought me, and it was unavoidable but that I must continue dependent upon him. I had laid up nothing in store, and excepting a little furniture and linen, and my little library, had nothing to bring with me to Marlborough. As I had engaged to serve the people for £30 per annum, I was under the necessity to set out parsimoniously. Mr. Whitefield's hints often occurred to me, and as I had previously to my settling at Marlborough, adopted them, so in the early part of my residence there especially, they were of great advantage to me. It was well I had learned to be contented with a little, and to habituate myself to frugality.

By an exhibition obtained from the independent board, and now and then a present obtained from my much honoured friend Mr. Thornton, I was enabled to render a little assistance to the poor, as well as to defray my own expenses.

I now more than ever found the want of a greater share of literature. Marlborough is a high church neighbourhood and full of prejudice against methodism, for under that appellation I was considered, and many of its inhabitants are men of letters: therefore, that I might not disgrace my profession through ignorance, any more than by making an ostentatious parade of learning, I entered sparingly into company, conversed with caution, and improved my time to the best advantage. I had no notion of studying merely for the sake of making myself an acceptable companion; indeed, to go on with my design, it was necessary that I should preclude company. I still kept the important object of an active ministry in view, which engrossed all my time. I preached thrice on the Lord's-day, met a society on the Monday evening, statedly preached a lecture on the Thursday evening, preached in the country on Tuesday, or on Wednesday, or on Friday, and very often had engagements on each day in the evening, and on Saturday held a reading and prayer meeting. From this rule I seldom deviated, and at the same time held a correspondence, of which I have before remarked that it took up too much of my time, and diverted me from more important pursuits in my younger years; latterly it has become indispensable.

Our congregations grew, and some good

was done, ut the prejudice of the neighbourhood was very powerful, and the young people, as is usually the case, imbibed it. Some indiscretions previous to my settlement had created disgust, nor were they entirely removed at my coming. I found as I gained knowledge of my flock, that I had need of patience, while I had cause for thankfulness. I was not a stranger to the divine presence, neither in my retired moments nor in my public work. Always weakly, I felt the weight of my office. I never gave myself to intense thinking, but with disadvantage to my health; nor was it without a considerable degree of languor, that I passed through the exercises of the study, or the pulpit. The closeness of the country-houses in which I preached, and the different changes I passed from heat to cold, had a hazardous effect upon my frame, which though often shocked, has not been suffered yet to fall. It has been matter of surprise to me that I have been so little disabled, amidst such sensible weakness as I have experienced. Many great men have fallen while I have continued to stand. Sturdy oaks have been torn up by the roots, while I, a shrub, have only been bent by the strength of the wind. Why this difference, is best known to Him who suffers nothing to occur by chance. Our times are in his hands who hath given us our work, and till our work is done, our day will not close. Every star has its fixed period for rising and setting. It has its hemisphere appointed to it, yea, and its orbit also. We move arranged in our places and do the work for which we are appointed: one shall not do the work of another, but every man in his own order. It becomes us to watch the appointments of Providence, to walk in his paths, to take care we do not clash with each other, neither to envy nor despise one another; but in our respective stations to act as the different builders in the same house, who, by taking their respective parts in the same edifice, aim jointly to bring the fabric to its perfection. You, my very dear friend, are an exact, may you be a very successful workman, in his hands, in whom I am, yours, affectionately.

LETTER XV.

My very dear friend,—I take it for granted, in what I have remarked on the divine conduct with me, you conceived that I have rather been stating facts, than complaining of difficulties. Nothing occurred which was insupportable; no disadvantage was thrown in my way but was remediable. My first settlement at Marlborough had many inconveniences attending it, which a more liberal subsistence might have prevented, and after a while, I judged they were only to be relieved by matrimony. I supposed there would be a delicacy in addressing a person of property, myself being destitute; and I conceived I should gain no relief by forming a connexion with one in circumstances equally narrow as my own. I considered my advance unsuitable to the commencement of family cares, especially as I had no prospect of becoming considerable in circumstances. I made it matter of prayer, that I might be directed to a suitable object by the good hand of Providence, which had hitherto enabled me to steer my course prudently. A friend, who well knew my sentiments upon this head, and conceived them proper, encouraged my indulging attention to Miss Brown, well known to the neighbourhood, whose respectable character and conduct procured her universal esteem. He introduced me to her. She was supposed to be very affluent, from the great liberality she exercised to the poor, for which she was enabled, rather from industry and economy, than from patrimony, or from the considerable profits she gained by a small farm, which, in conjunction with her youngest sister, she rented and superintended. When I had been repeatedly in her company, and was satisfied with her genuine piety, I addressed a plain letter to her.

After some little hesitation and objection, raised only from the opposition my offer was like to meet with from a numerous family, I found I had firm ground upon which to advance. The opposition arose from my religion, and the idea that I was devoid of integrity, and an honest design. This idea no encomium in my favour could remove. Some little stratagem was used to prevent our union, but I went forward with a fixed determination to enjoy my object, not doubting that time would produce a conviction which testimony could not, and that I should be a gainer in the end. Therefore on the 20th of April 1779, we entered into wedlock. We had previously considered that our joint income, being about £55 per annum, would not admit of our living in splendour, and we had laid our plan answerable to our pittance. By this we regulated our life, and experienced the blessing of the Lord upon it. We erected our altar for sacrifice as soon as we came from church, upon which we then presented our joint offering. We have continued regularly and statedly in the presentation, and though it has been attended with all that imperfection which has rendered it unworthy of the notice of an holy God, yet, for the sake of his ever blessed Son, we have reason to conclude it has met with acceptance.

I supposed now, that I had before me my only work in which I should be engaged, the work of the ministry, which I determined, in the strength of divine grace, diligently to attend, and I did not suppose my family would consist of a third person. But God's thoughts and purposes were different to my thoughts

and expectations, and events occurred that set me at the head of a large family in a very little time.

In the days of my itineracy, I had often said, that if I were ever settled, I would give some poor child a common education. Recollecting my resolution, I fixed upon the eldest child of our deacon, Mr. John Simmons, a poor, but deserving man; I taught him from his alphabet, till he was made fit for business, into which I was instrumental of introducing him, and in which I believe he is now going on very prosperously.

In the first year of my marriage, I had occasion to go to Bristol, and among others I called upon Mrs. Higgs, one of my first acquaintance in the city. She said, "I have long wished you settled for the sake of Tommy," who was the youngest of her two surviving children, then little more than ten years old; "I expect," said she, "you will now take him," adding, "I care not what you do with him, if you will but take him." He was a sweet amiable child, who had enough in him to attract my affection. I signified my attachment to him, and that I had not the least objection to receive him, but that I was not sure Mrs. Winter would accept the offer; however, I proposed to take him upon a Christmas visit, with a design to return him again, if Mrs. Winter would not consent to keep him. The dear little fellow accompanied me with all readiness. On our parting, Mrs. Higgs said, "I give him to you." I replied, "I accept the gift," little thinking what was to be the event. His engaging and open conversation every step of the way home, in which he gave strong indication of a mind under some pious influence, riveted him to me. Every friend I called upon was fond of him, and when we came home he was universally noticed with esteem. His pious disposition, which I certainly cherished, was improperly ascribed to my care of him. This induced Mrs. Turner, of Trowbridge, to press a favourite nephew upon me, whom I very reluctantly accepted, not because he was unworthy of my esteem, but because I feared to have more of a tutor's business in hand than I was equal to. Mrs. Turner conceived after a while, her nephew had caught the flame of piety from my lamp, and reported such high things concerning me as impressed a gentleman of Bath; and by this I was drawn into an extreme difficulty. I used every method consistent with prudence to divert his attention from me. We were as yet a little happy family indeed. The children loved our worship, had been used to my ministry, could be taken with us on a journey; they sat and sang comfortably with us by our fire-side, entertained us by their prattle, and ran upon our little errands; but by taking the sons of a gentleman, I conceived I should take children used to a superior line of life, rather unfriendly to our religious views, and in other respects very unsuitable to me. My intimate neighbours, to whom I had communicated the difficulty I was under from the gentleman's unwillingness to receive my refusal of his sons, pressed me very much to increase my number to six, observing I should find my account in it.

Had I been convinced in my own mind that I should have done right in opening a school, I could easily have collected scholars, and by providing a proper assistant, should have made the business easy; but, from the small acquaintance I had with letters, and the little confidence I was inclined to place in men, I could not be convinced I did right, nor could I be satisfied that it was prudent fully to state the reason of my refusal. Committing the event to God, and knowing that I designed his glory, I yielded to the gentleman's motion, who fixed the day for his two sons being at Marlborough. They came accompanied by the good mother, who was so disgusted at the report of my being a Methodist, and by the plainness of my accommodations, that she took them back with her immediately to Bath, without assigning a reason, or giving me an opportunity to exchange three words with her. This affair was attended with a little shock, which, owing to the shattered state of my nerves, I was not able to bear, and it occasioned my neighbours, who were all out of their doors, to conjecture the cause. But I was soon reduced to a state of composure, and concluded it was the way Providence used to prevent a greater trial. In a few weeks after, however, the young gentlemen were brought back by the good lady's consent, and the connexion issues in permanent friendship with the eldest brother, who hath given me opportunity to show my attachment to him for many years; and has proved himself worthy of my most cordial esteem by many pledges of his own for me. Accidentally I have laid my hands upon a few lines accompanied with two handsome volumes, sent me by the above-mentioned young gentleman, soon after we parted; which may be considered as the beginning of a correspondence, and I think it a tribute of respect due to him to insert it here.

"Sir,—I have not time at present to write a letter, but only a line, to inform you that I shall never forget the many kindnesses I received while under your care, and beg your acceptance of the enclosed as an acknowledgment of them."

It bears date September 1, 1783. At my request he was then removed, but returned to me again by his own earnest desire. He now fills a benefice in the establishment, and may he long continue to fill it, and preach that gospel, the truths of which he acknowledges to have received while at Marlborough. You

may conceive of his continued esteem by the following extract from one of his letters:

"After a long interval of silence but not of forgetfulness, I again break in upon you—forget you indeed I cannot; for whenever I enter my pulpit, or sit down in my study. I find myself expressing ideas I have learned from you, and which bring with them the remembrance of my much respected friend."—Speaking of the liberality which should subsist between the church and the Dissenters, and the true nature of worship, he says, "You know, and I feel this: for from you I learned it, and now I am often happy that I have passed a part of my life under your roof, as it has prevented me from imbibing many illiberal and unjust prejudices, which several both in and out of the establishment are got to entertain." "I have just attentively perused your letter again. Every kind exhortation that comes from your pen, has its full weight upon me, and I hope God, of his infinite goodness, will enable me to follow it." The writer of the above was one of twelve, whom I had together at one time. Of all of them, it may be remarked they were fine youths—they engaged the esteem of the neighbourhood, and gained me credit—they were as my own children. They enabled me to keep a cut loaf, and a running tap for the poor. If I recollect the fatigue, I recollect also the pleasure I had with them, when I could keep them to business—when I was witness to their progress—when their voices were engaged in the praises of God—when their innocent conversation at the table gave vivacity to my spirits, particularly after a third public service on the Lord's-day, when they contributed to relieve me from the sensibility of weariness, and when dismissing them to their rest, I received proof of their affection, and embraced them in my heart while I pronounced upon them the blessing of my lips.

Mr. Higgs was my *primus*. I had laboured to make him useful to me, and he was essentially so. He grew in stature and in knowledge. He was a constant, and I believe a willing attendant upon the means of grace, and very feelingly entered into the spirit of the sermons he heard. I encouraged his views of the ministry, and promoted his preparation for it, by a liberal education; consequently, though he was my right hand, as soon as I had carried my exertions to the uttermost, I knew it was my duty to part with him. But his parents were not equal to the expense, and by the advice of Mrs. Verbruggen, the lady who for a time made one of our family, he was sent to Lingen, in Westphalia, from the mistaken notion that his education would be more completely finished, and at a far less expense than at one of our universities.

I went with him to London, and there commended him to God. It was intended that he should continue at Lingen two years; but after the absence of little more than half a year, I received him again. This was owing partly to disappointment to what was our object; but principally to his own extreme dissatisfaction, founded in causes of moral and religious complaint, both in the seminarium and the university: nothing could be more licentious than the habits of the students, while a dreadful dearth of every thing good prevailed. Previously to his return, which was October the 30th, 1786, I had been diligent in securing him clerical friendship, to enable him, in proper time, to enter the establishment, to which his turn of mind led him. I thought I could do him service by introducing him to my highly respected friend, the Rev. Mr. Spencer, of Wingfield. He kindly acceded to my motion, and made him upon very easy terms, *pro tempore*, one of his family. There, and at Marlborough, he spent his time till he entered Oxford, which was the close of the long vacation, 1787.

How wonderful are the ways of Providence. That all the mortal part of the dear youth, with whom so many pains had been taken, should have been in the silent grave at a time when we expected he would have been in the full vigour of life, proclaiming the truths of the gospel of the grace of God, is one among the many mysterious events that call for submission. It is with peculiar satisfaction I reflect that you, my dear friend, are continued a blessing to a part, a large part of the church of Christ.—I am, yours, &c.

LETTER XVI.

My very dear friend,—If sloth in any department of life be a blemish to a character, it must be a very dreadful one in that of a minister; but a minister may be free from the charge of sloth, and yet not perfectly busy. To spend the hours and days in composing a few sermons, smooth and elegant to the ear, which should be employed in preaching many with energy to the heart, is a waste of time. Of many good men it may be said they are "laboriously doing nothing:" whereas if they would study usefulness, they would give many of these moments to public labour, that are now devoted to unnecessary exactness. The thought applies to country ministers who are surrounded with villages, but communicate the gospel of the grace of God to none of them. When there are real and insurmountable impediments to exertion, a man is free from the reflection; but if circumstances and situation favour diligence, and a man is not diligent, he is inattentive to the direction, "work while it is called to-day." Village preaching is of importance to useful-

ness. I am glad such powerful efforts are now used to support it. To carry it on, was always an object with me. I diligently attended to it while I was at Marlborough, but my attention to the school, and the studies to which I was obliged to turn my mind, in order to discharge my duty in it, relaxed my attention to this important object. I therefore wished I had it in my power to support a young man of pious character, and of improvable gifts, who might receive my communications, and by preaching in the villages, habituate himself to free speaking. Though the idea of such a person was in my mind, I knew not where to look for him, and if I had met with him, I was at a loss to know how I should support him.

Mr. Surman, an excellent youth in humble life, always engaged my notice when I preached at Dursley; and I seldom left the congregation without exchanging a word with him; but as I hardly ever had time upon my hand, we did not abound in conversation. Being upon a visit in Gloucestershire, in the Midsummer of 1782, and having appointed on a Lord's-day to preach at Frampton, entering the court, I unexpectedly saw him. Instantly I had an impression for which I cannot account, that I must take him to impart instruction to him, and to introduce him into the ministry. I desired him to meet me in my retirement; I was under such a fever that I suspected at the same time I should be laid aside. I begged him to read the Scriptures to me, by which I found his deficiency. I asked him if ever he thought of the ministry. He replied, he had; but could not indulge it, as he concluded there was no opening in Providence. I proposed his coming to me under certain terms, which he approved of, if he saw, on prayer and deliberate consideration, it was the Divine will. When his mind was fully satisfied, he acceded to my motion, settled his affairs with great integrity, and gave himself first to the Lord, and then to me. Surely I may venture to call that an act of faith, which was engaged in under what I conceive to have been a divine impression; and for the prosecution of which I had no prospect of support. The event has shown it was of the Lord. Mr. Surman soon proved a very acceptable and useful minister, and a very consistent character. For the sake only of giving him an opportunity to learn the world, I sent him upon a pleasurable excursion to London, where his preaching gained such attention, that in less than three years after he came to me, he was providentially taken from me, and yet lives a blessing to the church at large, and to a particular society, more immediately, at Chesham in Bucks, over which he was ordained pastor. May his life and usefulness be prolonged.

Soon after Mr. Surman came to me, Mr. Yockney, of Warminster, signified his desire to retreat from secular life, to devote himself to the preaching of the gospel. He was already blessed with rich experience, and of decent education. Given up to God, and fond of retirement, he made the best use of a little time, and by his assiduity in my absence, I was released of anxiety about the school, as the best care was taken to keep my little folks to business, and the devotions of the family, by these two good men, and Mr. Higgs, were regularly carried on. As Mr. Yockney purposed paying for his board, I had no difficulty about accepting him. He was happy and useful with me, till removed by Providence, and soon after obtained a settlement at Staines, in Middlesex, where abundant honour continues to be put upon his ministry.

It was at this time our services were required, and freely given in the village of Tisbury, that gave you birth. Several months previously to the 2d of April, 1785, my eye was upon you, my dear friend, more immediately than upon any other in the congregation, and my heart knit unaccountably to you. Making inquiry concerning you of Mrs. Turner, she mentioned your name with the anecdote which distinguishes you in her life. I told her I was impressed with an idea that I should one day have you under my roof. You having perfect understanding of all things from the very beginning, can trace the occurrences of this period respecting yourself. You recollect the number and the order of our family, and the worthy female friends which made part of it. How applicable to the description of our happiness and harmony is this stanza:

> The day glides swiftly o'er their head
> Made up of innocence and love;
> And soft and silent as the shade
> Their nightly minutes gently move.

To all that was kind and amiable in you, my dear friend, under God, we were, in part, indebted for that happiness. You contributed your quota to it, and had your share in return. —O blessed villages which were favoured with your respective ministerial abilities. O highly favoured Marlborough, whose streets were then occasionally thronged with them, who went to and from the house of God, and had their hearts filled with joy and gladness. I bless the Lord for all that he since has done for you, and by you.

Mr. Spicer must not be forgotten. He came at the desire of his uncle into our family, and is worthy to be had in remembrance, though after a long and fair trial it was found, that large as his capacity was, his want of elocution prevented his acceptance. He stands high in my esteem, and is, I believe the beloved of the Lord.

The editors of the Evangelical Magazine, Vol. v. page 47, have given the life of Mr. William Griffin—a truly valuable life, and with this concise and general testimony, I refer to his biography. Besides our stated

times of devotion, our breakfast and tea readings were considerable, nor were we wanting in recreative conversation. To rise early and retire early, was one of our maxims. Our partings and meetings proved we were in the bonds of friendship. The Lord made us to be of one mind. But we became scattered in time; and the weight of the school resting entirely upon me, from a necessary regard to my health, which was much impaired, I became determined to break it up.

About this time my affairs began to wear a different aspect to what they had done, and a variety of occurrences disposed me to think of leaving Marlborough. I soon began to feel that in giving up my school, I had given up such a measure of my substance, that my circumstances were in danger of being involved. I was quite at a loss for a while to determine what to do. I had devised many things, but could bring none of them to bear. I felt reluctant at leaving the place where I had laboured hard. The neighbourhood at this time was reconciled to me, but not to my ministry. My sole success had been with the poor. A most dreadful failure had turned out, which had ruined one of the principal families who attended my preaching. By interfering to prevent a marriage which I conceived would prove injurious to the parties, I had made an enemy of one of my first professing friends; and a circumstance in addition to the whole, turned up to convince me I must remove. The meeting-house was the private property of Mr. H———k, from whom I received £10 out of the £30 per annum, for which I stipulated. He was very rapidly going to the grave. His sons were by no means likeminded with him. The eldest of them continued his attendance upon the word in general. Having one Sabbath-day evening a very crowded congregation, as I usually had, and knowing the dissipated state and disposition of many of the young people, I preached a very plain, faithful sermon. It was certainly all applicable to Mr. H———k; but I did not think of him, nor did I know he was there. However he considered it as a personal address to himself, and protested, when he went out he would never hear me again. I saw that I must soon decamp, or sink into a most uncomfortable situation. I had an attachment to Devizes, and supposed Mr. Sloper, who knew it, would have been disposed to keep me in Wilts, the state of his health requiring assistance, for which his people were able and willing to provide. I had been in long friendship with him, had shown him sympathy, and rendered him help, under many of his domestic and church trials. A friend from Gloucester had been with me, to whom I freely communicated my difficulties. He gave me encouragement to make an offer of my services to the church and congregation at Painswick, in the county of Gloucester. This was a county to which I was partial, but I held myself bound by the fidelity of friendship to Mr. Sloper, not to take a step without first consulting him. He signified he could not advise me what I should do, and referred me to the leadings of Providence. I was then in a disabled state, under a fit of the gout. I wrote to my friend in Gloucester, to say that if the church at Painswick were disposed to give me encouragement, I had no objection to put myself in the way of their notice. I had given warning to quit my house, without knowing whither I was to go—at that juncture of time the congregation at Painswick were so disunited in their sentiments of a gentleman who stood candidate for their service, that he withdrew his motion, and on the mention of my name, they unanimously agreed to accept me. An occurrence of Providence that much impressed my mind was this: Mr. Edwards, of Stratford-upon-Avon, being about to leave his people, and going upon a probationary visit to Wilton, pressed me to pay a visit to Stratford. I engaged, on my return, to preach at Painswick, and while upon my journey wrote to Mr. Hancock, signifying my design of leaving Marlborough, stating my reasons, and appealing to him for the propriety of my conduct. But before my letters could reach his house, he was almost suddenly removed into the eternal world. This information reaching me by a letter from Mr. Higgs, threw light upon my steps. The house, which during my residence in Marlborough had been always open to me, and from whence many favours had been communicated, was on the father's death instantly shut against me by the heir; nor would he permit me, though invited by the rest of the family, to accompany the remains of his father to the tomb.

The long acquaintance the people at Painswick had with me, and my preaching being so fully known by them, made them indifferent to a probationary visit: though, strange to tell, for a faithful hint, misunderstood and misapplied by a ruling elder, I had been excluded from the same pulpit seventeen years! The good old man, whose authority barred me out, has ever since our connexion been a staunch friend, and we have lived together in the strictest amity. He had long held the reins of government in the church, and was strongly prejudiced against Methodists, of which description he had considered me. He had been mortified by contradiction; but amidst all his prejudice was of too great integrity to indulge war, and experience has taught me, he was to be won by prudence and patience.

As soon and as quietly as I could, I disengaged myself from Marlborough, but with vast pain of mind when the crisis came. I had some distress on Mrs. Winter's account, who had never before left the vicinity of her

birthplace, and by the change of her situation, was withdrawn from a circle of affectionate relations, particularly from her sisters. Yet I had reason to be thankful on perceiving her strive so magnanimously against her feelings, and on her complying so readily with the motion of Providence. On balancing my accounts, I found myself in arrears, and my removal was attended with an expense considerably above what was allowed me. A deplorable disaster attended my goods in removal; but the combined trials were attended with a combination of suitable mercies, on the review of which fresh gratitude arises in my mind. A disposition to trust in the Lord was granted me at the time, and I knew by experience the import of those words, "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on thee." I had just succeeded in procuring Mr. Higgs his college subsistence. It being the time of his long vacation, he was with me, and was very useful in assisting our removal. By visits to his schoolmate, Mr. Horlick, he well knew Painswick; came a little before us with Mr. Spicer; and on the 2d of August, 1788, received us on the spot where I am now writing. It is a farm, the property of Mr. King, to whom I have above referred. It is beautiful for situation. It is half a mile on the north of Painswick, and six miles south-east of Gloucester. It was offered me as a temporary accommodation; but I told my friends if they could make it convenient to let me dwell by them, I would seek no other. In an habitation at one end of the farm-house, the dimension of the principal room of which is thirteen feet in width, fifteen in breadth, and six feet eight inches and a quarter in height, I lose sight and sense of every inconvenience, as happy as I can be in this mortal state, in the advantage of peace, fresh air, and retirement. Mr. Higgs says to his brother, in a letter soon after our settlement, "I am charmed with the solitude of Mr. Winter's situation. I see nobody here but the family; I have no companion but my books. I cannot describe how happy we are." Little did he think he was to be gratified, and that so soon, when, with his pencil, he wrote upon the wall of the room where he slept and studied,

"Hic ipso tecum consumerer ævo."

I perceived no indisposition upon him, till a little before he returned to college. The day he left us to enter upon his term, he was not quite well, nor alarmingly ill. I have no letter by me that I can find, previous to the 29th of October, informing me of the increase of his indisposition; but in consequence of information from Miss W———e, his elect, of his being indisposed, I wrote to him.

"My dear Thomas,—It has given us no small concern to hear, by letter received on Saturday from Miss W———e, of your indisposition. It would have less surprised me, if I had not previously heard on Monday, that the disorder in the head and eyes prevails very much. Yet that does not alleviate my fear from the fits returning upon you, as I find you have had them more than once. I have been led to account for it from some shock you received in Bristol, from your father's situation, and other family occurrences. I may be out in my conjecture. If I am not, I would request you not to dispirit yourself. It would hardly be right to desire you not to feel the loss of a parent, supposing I could regulate your passions: but any little disappointment that may attend, of a pecuniary nature, need not discourage you, as no doubt but the resources which close at home, will open abroad. If you are in God's way he will provide, and bring you through the difficulties of college expenses. While you perform the part of a faithful steward with the pittance you have, more shall be given you as it is needful. Let us know as soon as you can, how you do, and write freely of all that is upon your mind. No more of your letters shall transpire than may be necessary to give your friends pleasure; to hear from you, is gratifying to us all on this peaceful spot. I hope by this time you are restored to the use of your sight, as well as to your former degree of strength. It is a loud speaking Providence to be so afflicted, and I am persuaded you are disposed to improve it. Since we hold every faculty upon such uncertain terms, how careful should we be to improve them to his glory, who gives them freely, and can deprive us of them at a moment's warning, or even without warning at all. Let your attention in future be much employed in the Scriptures. Transcribe them from the leaves on which they lie open to the eye, into the book of your heart. You will find your want of them for your own personal comfort, and for your ministerial furniture, if you mean to work upon your own stock; that is, if by meditation, and not by plagiarism, you prepare for the pulpit."

I might have spared my advice for the pulpit employ. He was worse than I apprehended. A gentleman of his hall became his amanuensis, and in his name writes thus, in reply to the last extract:—"Since the reception of yours, I have been so indisposed, as not only to be unable to write, but even to dictate a letter.—My disorder is considerably increased.—On Monday last I had four epileptic fits, which have left behind them a very nervous affection. I sometimes begin to think that Providence intends to cut my work short here, and to take me from this world of misery. Patience must have its perfect exercise, and I desire complete resignation to the Divine will. It certainly is a great affliction to be deprived of the amusement which reading affords. Oh that I had

used my time better when I had it in my power. One of the most disagreeable symptoms of my disorder is a palpitation of heart, from which I am scarcely ever free. The happy time will come when it shall cease its throbbings. As soon as I have kept my term, which will be next Monday week, I intend going to Bristol, and to put myself under the care of Dr. Ludlow. Miss W———e will accompany me to Bristol, and if I recover my strength, we intend coming together into Gloucestershire."

On the 20th of January, 1789, I received the last letter he ever dictated.

"Honoured and dear sir,—You will perceive that I am yet unable to write, and when I shall be able is very uncertain indeed. We have been long expecting you in Bristol, but imagined the rough weather, or some unforeseen circumstance prevented you. No friend ever comes more grateful to our family, but more particularly to me. As I am sometimes ready to imagine I shall need little more of your kindness, I have reflected a good deal upon the abundant measure I have already received. I hoped Providence would have afforded me opportunities of showing my grateful sense of them: if it should not, be assured they were not lost upon me. My whole frame is much out of order, my eyes very little, if any, better since you heard from us last; I dare say you will think my situation very melancholy. Confined to my fireside ever since the Christmas week, with my eyes so dim that I am unable to read, or write, or see any thing distinctly; a painful seton in my neck, my mouth much affected with the mercury I have taken, and my legs swelled for want of exercise. You will think my case very hard, and be ready to condole with me.—But spare your pains, my dear sir, I grieve not for myself, I have not an uneasy thought. The reflection, that it is not a thousandth part of what I deserve, makes me resigned to the dispensation, though gloomy, and I adore the divine mercy, in preserving me from the pains of hell. The physician has just been here, and has ordered another seton to be cut in my temple to-morrow; it is a painful operation, but it is of the Lord, let him do what seemeth him good. —If we meet not again here, I hope we shall in a better world, where separation will no more take place.—I remain, dear sir, yours, affectionately, THOMAS HIGGS."

On the receipt of the above, I went to Bristol, and found him as he described himself, with other serious symptoms upon him. He seemed very desirous to come to Painswick, and with difficulty affected the journey, in the beginning of February. I sent for Miss W———e, also, which was a great gratification to him. She nursed him with great tenderness and modesty, and was a painful witness to his drawing his last breath. He was frequently very cheerful—but not very communicative. He engaged sometimes in family prayer; and when his pains were not severe, was very attentive to any one who read to him. In the evening previous to dissolution, he exclaimed with an innocent soft accent, rather as surprised than terrified, "Oh dear! I have entirely lost the use of my limbs." Finding he could enjoy the recumbent posture on neither side, I fixed myself on the bolster, and supported him between my knees in my arms. It pleased him, and now and then we exchanged a word. Grateful acknowledgments frequently proceeded from him for kindness received. Soon after he said, "Oh dear, I am going!" and without a struggle he instantly became a corpse.

It has been asserted that a stranger cannot feel like a parent, but I deny the assertion. Oh, how did I feel when I relieved my arms from the dear youth, who knew no more of an uneasy posture! Before that decisive moment how many anxious fears filled my breast, lest his mind should be beguiled. How earnest were my exertions to preserve that spark alive, that I was desirous to see advance to a flame. Disappointed in my expectation, I was ready to say, I have laboured in vain, and spent my strength for nought, and in vain. But reflection corrects the conclusion. Oh no, it was not in vain. He is not a minister in the church, but he is a saint in light. —He was exceedingly beloved by his associates at Edmund-hall. A circle of them, with whom I breakfasted, told me in his absence he was an honour to their society. His tutor, in a letter he wrote to me, in return to that wherein I announced his death, says, "I sympathise with you very sincerely on the loss of this amiable youth, whose good example in our society, will long be remembered with pleasure and sorrow. From the little probability of his restoration to useful life, I consider his removal from this state of suffering, as an instance of that mercy, on which he was enabled to build his hopes. The will of the Lord has been done by him; however the fond expectation of short-sighted men have been frustrated, I am persuaded he has not lived in vain."

In all this you have an opportunity to review the life of him, whom divine sovereignty saw fit to cut off in the flower of his days—you are spared, and long may you be spared if it be God's blessed will, after the hand that guides this pen can no more admit of my subscribing myself, my very dear friend, yours, affectionately, &c.

LETTER XVII.

My very dear friend,—I have brought you within a very few paces of my progress,

and if, in traveling through the former pages, you find it tedious, you may now proceed with pleasure from the idea, that after a very few steps more, you will have a long halt. You have frequently, yet not so often as I could wish, seen me in my cottage of content, where my motto would be, if I were to put it over my door, "*Parva parvum decent.*" But as I came to Painswick, not to please myself, but to finish the work my heavenly Father gave me to do, I proceeded according to the opening of Providence. At my first coming, I collected a class of children and young people, among whom I opened catechetical lectures. I was not contented with exact answers to the questions of a prescribed formulary; but I wanted to prove the attention and the genius of the children, and to discover if there were any principles of grace, that, under proper nurture, would appear to advantage. As well, therefore, as hear them the Assembly's catechism, I asked them questions extempore, and often received such pertinent and significant answers, as rejoiced my heart. By this means I singled out several, of which number was Mr. Wood, who while in a course of education for the ministry, died with me, and of whom there is a short account in the Evangelical Magazine, vol. ii. page 207:—Mr. Hogg, of truly amiable disposition, and who is now just entering the establishment:—Mr. Clift, of Frome, who with an improved understanding, started early, and has hitherto worn well. About the same time I received from the Devizes, Mr. Sloper, now useful and happy at Plymouth. I was uncertain of help, but confident it would be granted, as there was occasion for it. Mr. Welch, by your motion, intrusting me with the care of three students upon his own foundation, I placed Mr. Clift and Mr. Wood upon it, and applied to Mr. Golding, late of Croydon, to come as the third. Blessed be God I have lately been witness to his growth, and perceive he is ripening in his gifts and in his grace. By the motion of the late Mr. Thornton, I took Mr. Griffin, who with the greatest credit passed his three years with me, in diligence and usefulness; and is well known for the very respectable and useful manner in which he acquits himself in the pastoral charge at Portsea, Hants. I might mention Mr. Underhill, who was determined to be with me almost upon any terms; but alas! though he did run well, he is hindered, and he is the only one of all the sons I have brought up, in whom I cannot rejoice. Disengaged in the order of time from these, I thought, now I could do no more to serve the church of Christ in this way, and proceeded to accommodate myself to the retirement of the study, and the exertions of the pulpit, till my mind received a farther impression in favour of Mr. Richardson, who is my faithful Achates. He is the fruit of my ministry, endeared by his steady and uniform deportment. It was with more than former caution, I watched to be satisfied that it was right to call him from tools to books; but when fully satisfied, I proceeded upon the old plan; he is now with me, as a son with a father, and it appears as though our separation will not produce a distance of more than thirteen miles. His gifts have made him an object to the people of Frampton, with whom I think he will settle and be happy.

In the complete eleven years which have revolved over me since I have been here, I have met with little in my pastoral connexion to disturb or afflict me. Family differences, personal prejudice, and some instances of immorality, have proved a source of affliction; but these and a few other proofs of human imperfections excepted, I am surrounded with a poor, simple, pious, affectionate people, who contribute willingly, though slenderly, according to their ability, to my subsistence; and for whom I will very gladly spend, and be spent.

I have more reason to be thankful for, than to complain of the attention shown to my ministry. Though death and incidents continually occur to produce changes in our congregation, it continues respectable for number. The inhabitants of the town have their strong prejudices against the system I hold myself bound to support; and the preaching of it out of the church, renders it additionally obnoxious. Yet they show respect to my person. I am indeed in a station of mercy, which I have no disposition to exchange for another. I have my times of refreshing from the presence of the Lord, in the congregation, in the family, and in the study. No one can conceive, after a third service on the Lord's day, my mind having been free in my work, and having had reason to conclude the word has been made a blessing, with what joy and tranquillity of mind I return to my mansion in miniature. It affords me all I want till I get where there are rivers of pleasure.—I realize a few lines I have met with in Pope, and which I a little alter, for the sake of expressing what for full eleven years I have enjoyed.

> "Here humble joys of home-felt quiet please,
> Successive study, exercise, and ease;
> Here I most sweetly pass my tranquil days,
> And would devote them to my Saviour's praise."

I am within two months of entering my fifty-eighth year. Infirmities, to which I never was entirely a stranger, press upon my constitution, and weariness resulting from almost every degree of exertion. On reviewing papers necessary to be inspected to bring this memoir to its conclusion, I find fourteen years back I was exercised with the same symptoms as beset me now—but the Lord has been my support, and having obtained

help of him, I continue unto this day—I am amidst all capable of relishing life, but I would not by the enjoyments I am capable of, and with which I am indulged, be bound. Rather I would indulge a desire to depart and to be with Christ, and would wait for his summons. Whenever it may please him to call me hence, I expect to meet with acceptance only in my Saviour's righteousness. All my salvation is in him; independent of him I am nothing, and hope for nothing. My deficiencies are many, but I would not indulge one of them. Each, as discovered, is a cause of mourning. Nothing that I have done, or that I can do, will afford me satisfaction. The whole is the effort of an imperfect and an impure creature, whom it becomes, in gratitude, to study to advance the glory of God, by whom he is made a monument of grace, by whose kind providence he has been supported and preserved, and who remembered him in his low estate.

To God—the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and Jacob, I commend you, my very dear friend.—That he may be your God for ever and ever, and your guide through a very long life, even unto a late and easy death; and that your yoke-fellow and offspring may abound in the blessings of Providence, in the exceeding riches of grace, and with you finally partake of eternal glory, is the prayer of, ever yours, affectionately, &c.

Painswick, August 17, 1799.

PART II.*

CHAPTER I.

HIS LIFE CONTINUED.

It has been seen by the date of the preceding letters, that Mr. Winter's account of himself, leaves near nine years of his life unnoticed. He was often urged to carry on the relation; he intended it—but it was delayed till the purposes of his heart were broken off. It remains therefore for the Editor to take up the narrative, and bring it down to the closing scene; and this can be done much more easily than the recovery of any earlier periods of his history. Indeed, the events that require particular notice are not numerous.

In November 1800, he met with a very painful affliction, which confined him for a long time from his public work, but gave him an opportunity to glorify God in the fires; and proved how graciously qualified he was to suffer all the good pleasure of his will. He thus describes it in a letter to a friend. "The accident happened just after I had left a venerable dying woman, whom I had been to visit. After proper conversation, in which I found much heavenly refreshment, we prepared for prayer, by reading the 12th chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews. Every word was precious; but the 9th, 10th, and 11th verses came with such light and energy to my soul, that I could have immediately preached from them. The matter of my prayer far exceeded the sick woman's case. I prayed that God would prepare us for whatsoever he had prepared for us, and made a particular resignation of myself into the Lord's hand. It was a very heavy, rainy, night. I was at the bottom of a declivity, upon the plainest ground. I never walked more cautiously: but my foot slipped, and the master-bone of my leg was broken in two places."

The fracture appeared extremely remarkable, as he did not strike his foot against a stone; nor bend his leg under him; but fell upon his back. He was near a mile from his house; and as the only chaise in the town was absent, he was conveyed home in the best vehicle that could be procured. Many followed the cart with tears, to his cottage. He was taken out, and laid upon the bed—but before he would allow the surgeon to proceed, he begged that all might be permitted to come up into his chamber.—He then offered up a prayer with such composure, and with such particularity, entering into all the cases which he commonly noticed in family devotion, that it will never be forgotten by any who heard it.

What the state of his mind was, will appear from the following extract of a letter to the Editor, which he dictated a very short time after.—"I need not tell you that the consequence is confinement upon the bed, in one posture, and very acute pain. But through the goodness of God, I have an experience to relate that redounds much to his glory; and if I was not disaffected to the egotism, I should use it much upon the present occasion. Shall I venture to tell you, that I am a stranger to murmuring and impatience; that I am in a state of entire resignation; that I have given myself quite up to God and to the surgeon; that though I may groan in the dead of the night, it is merely to sooth the pain; and that I can sooth it better by prayer and praise, and reciting the word of God, than by groaning! I have dismissed all anxiety from my mind. I, who am naturally impatient of suffering, had as much happiness as I was capable of containing the night after the accident, and ever since have known no sorrow. The reason is

* In the original edition, the following, as a dedication to this part, was prefixed:—"To those Gentlemen in civil life who were once under the care of the Rev. Cornelius Winter, as Scholars; and more especially to all those in the Christian ministry, who enjoyed the unspeakable advantage of his tuition and example, as Students; this attempt, to do some justice to a character, which, as it is impossible for them to forget, so it is hoped they will always endeavour to resemble, is inscribed by one who is desirous to feel himself the obligations of which he takes the liberty to remind others.—W. J."

that, through grace, I am the heir of promise; and as is the promise, such is the veracity of him that hath made it. His promises are opposite to our exercises, and when the trial comes, then comes the fulfilment, at least to such a degree as the exigency renders necessary. As I am overwhelmed with a sense of the goodness and mercy of God, so I am with the sympathy and kindness of my neighbours in general, and my friends in particular. There is much mercy in the dispensation that I cannot exemplify upon this paper. I believe it is the prevention of some great evil, and that it will be productive of some great good. But, though I have thus expressed myself, I remember I am yet in the body, and not out of the reach of the enemies' temptations, which may put dimness upon the pure gold, and cause me to be the very reverse of what I describe. While I think I stand, I hope for grace to take heed lest I fall; and as our continuing constant in prayer is instrumental of security, so to be aided by the prayers of others, I esteem a very great blessing. Pray for me then, my dearest friend, as I do for you. The petition of the present moment is—Lord, keep all his bones, that not one of them may be broken."

He continued to feel and display the same spirit through all the months of his confinement. Faith and patience had their perfect work. All who were witnesses of the affliction were powerfully impressed by this passive preaching; and the surgeon who attended him, more than once made a remark to this effect—"Till I visited this man I thought religion was only a mere opinion, or something to talk about; but if I am not happily possessed of it myself, I am now convinced that there is a reality and excellency in it."

At length, by the use of his crutch and his staff, he was enabled to reach town, and by sitting in the pulpit, discharged again all the three services of the day. Enervated by his affl ction, preaching at this time appeared to him very formidable, and he often thought he must resign it. But it was rendered a blessing, and the congregation was enlarged.

Owing to the increase of hearers, and also the decayed state of the place, it was deemed desirable and necessary, to rebuild the meeting on a larger scale. The people, by all their exertions, could only raise a small proportion of the sum required for this purpose; the remainder was to be obtained by an application to the religious public. This called him forth as a beggar; and few of this order ever met with so much encouragement and success. His name had prepared his way. Many rejoiced to honour his case personally, and to recommend him to their connexions; and the difficulties which arose from his modesty and reserve, were more than counterbalanced by the promptitude of friendship.

But these excursions not only proved how high he stood in the esteem of thousands, numbers of whom he had never seen before; but gave him opportunities, which otherwise he never would have enjoyed, of an interview with many of his old friends, and of seeing the grace of God in the various churches, by which he was made glad.

The journies however were often tiresome and painful; and in a multitude of applications, he sometimes met with repulses which his tender spirit would very sensibly feel. The want of more rest and retirement was also frequently trying. But he was determined to persevere, and rejoiced in the thought, not that he should have a better local accommodation for preaching than before, but that he should leave a place convenient, large, and unincumbered, to a successor. This he often mentioned with evident satisfaction, accompanied with the remark, that it was not probable he should occupy it long himself. It was opened on the 13th of June 1804.

"Blessed is the man that endureth temptation." The word intends every thing by which grace is tried; and this applies not only to distressing events, but also to prosperous ones. Many have endured indigence and calamity, who have been sadly injured by a successful change in their circumstances. But the deceased had on the armour of righteousness, on the right hand and on the left. As when afflicted, he was not swallowed up of overmuch sorrow, so when indulged he was not exalted above measure. He could say with Paul, "I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound; every where and in all things I am instructed, both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. I can do all things through Christ, which strengtheneth me."—It had been seen how he could suffer, it was now to appear how he could possess. An addition was made to his income, which though it would have been inconsiderable to many, was far from being so to him. As I wish to make the subject of these memoirs as much as possible, the writer of them too, it will be proper to insert here a few extracts from his letters, relative to this affair.

"To his esteemed friend, Mr. P———e, of Stroud, who had been once his pupil, he writes—"Mrs. Shepherd, to whose kindness I am indebted for a competent subsistence, was a fellow orphan with me in the same family. She gave herself at a proper time to Mr. Shepherd, who was a man as poor as herself. By a series of events they prospered. But our friendship was broken off for many years, owing to a fraudulent act in which they both were guilty, having taken advantage of a defect in her uncle's will; and I never was in company with him after. I provoked him sadly the very year he died·

he might have put an effectual caveat against my ever inheriting his property. He left every thing to his wife; and when making his will, he said to the attorney, that she had a cousin whom he knew she would take care of. She sent for me up to London, in August 1803, desired that we might support friendship, and before I left town, made her will in my favour, leaving only a legacy of £10 to a neighbour. She had a wish to live with us, arranged her affairs accordingly, and wonderful to say, came to us on the 7th, and died on the 9th of June, at the very hour she had entered the house. She had settled all things so exactly, that no man ever had less trouble in taking possession of property than I have had. It will be little more to me neat than £150 per annum—a great estate to me, who have all my lifetime been in narrow and uncertain circumstances, and will make me easy to whatever period God may see fit to continue me here, and will enable me, if I precede Mrs. Winter to the eternal world, to leave her comfortable. The more I review the Providence, the more I am filled with astonishment. I am thankful, but not elevated; and think myself highly responsible to the Giver of every good gift, who remembered me in my low estate, and in my latter years has dealt so bountifully with me. I have no change to undergo; I shall neither eat nor drink more, nor wear better clothing; yet I would rather lay out than lay up."

In a letter to Miss C———l, Bristol.—"By this affecting Providence I am carried above necessity. My conscience obliges me to restore a sum of which I knew a widow had been unjustly deprived, and which therefore makes a part of the property; whether, after this, it may make me worth £150 per annum, I cannot say; however, I presume it may be something towards it. I receive it with great solemnity of spirit, rather than with elevation, and adore the hand that has committed it to my trust. It is given rather to improve to the good of others, than to devote wholly to myself. My case is the reverse of hers who said, "I went out full, and the Lord hath brought me home again empty." I entered life empty, and prevented with the blessings of his goodness, I close it with the enjoyment of bread to the full."

Addressing his very dear friend Mr. L——e of W———m, Shropshire.—"Had she died in London, I should never have received her whole property, as she lived among thieves. Her coming to Painswick with intention to live, and dying exactly on the four and twentieth hour after her arrival, is an event that exceedingly affects me whenever I think of it. The change it has produced in my circumstances is truly bumbling in my mind; elated I cannot—I would not be. Little did I think while we were entering Worcester, and I was mentioning to you the probability of my surviving Mrs. Shepherd, that her property would so soon fall into my hands; but thus it is, that God is often thinking of, and providing for us, when we are least apprehensive of it.—Blessed be his name, I have never known what anxiety for futurity is; but under narrow and uncertain subsistence have dwelt at ease. I do not now find an additional want, I have no alteration to make in my mode of living; but as the steward who is required to be found faithful to the talent entrusted to his care, I wish to impart of the favour imparted, and to consecrate it to God, from whom I have received it."

No person ever acquired a fortune with so little envy. Every one rejoiced at the intelligence, and the joy was as sincere as it was general. He derived indeed little or no personal benefit from it; it is questionable whether he had upon the whole so much coming in as before, since casual gratuities from various quarters now failed—people having a quick sagacity in discerning that a man no longer wants their assistance—while the number of applications and dependents multiplied. Imagining himself, however, independent in his circumstances, he resolved to alienate his ministerial salary to the support of an assistant, whom he deemed necessary, both from the state of his congregation, and his own growing infirmities. In consequence of this he was led to resume a work which he had declined for some years, and engaged two more students. These were Mr. Lane and Mr. Daniel. While they relieved him from one of the services of the Sabbath, they added to his mental fatigue by his attentions to them in the week; but he rejoiced to see that his labour was not in vain. They both became very acceptable preachers: Mr. Daniel is fixed in a scene of activity and usefulness at Kingswood, near Wotton-under-edge; Mr. Lane, after being compelled by threatening symptoms to refrain for a season from public exercises, is likely to settle at Wells. These were his last pupils.

The following two letters will serve to render this account more satisfactory, while they express feelings that do him honour, and apprehensions that were, alas! too soon to be realized.

The first was written about two months before his seizure, and was addressed to Mrs. S———r, of B———s, who had been much with him previous to her marriage, and for whom he entertained a paternal regard.

"My very dear daughter,—I sit down purposely to write something to you—I wish it may be something profitable, for otherwise a letter is nothing worth. The occurrences of the day come of course to be mentioned. You have heard we have left the hill, and answer the purpose of a tent by residing

where Miss Loveday used to reside.—Mrs. ——— spent upwards of a month with us here.—Could she have been reconciled to all the inconveniences of an invalid family, she would have been cordially welcome to have staid till Christmas; but our mode of living is so very different to hers, that I do not think she was quite comfortable. The fact is, that my fortune is reduced below the expected sum per annum, by the change it underwent, and the taxes it is under, so that though in itself a great blessing, economy is required in the use of it, especially as I have many mouths to feed upon it, besides those of our own family, that I may not entangle either it or myself. I have a turn for a little elegance, but I must dispense with it, content with ordinary things and common decency. I see my mercies more than my disadvantages, and desire that murmuring may never take the place of the great gratitude due daily to the God of my life. I am disappointed in not seeing more genuine religion produced by my labours. Some I hope fear God, and walk before him, but many are so irregular in their walk, that I fear for them.—I hope matters are different at B——s. I find the short time since I was there, has produced changes. Some have quitted the stage of life, and left vacant seats in the house of God; others are removed; while instability has turned away a few, yet our dear friend has a considerable number, by which his hands are strengthened. O that they may be his present joy and his future crown of rejoicing. How surprised I was to see him so full and fleshy. He credits his soil, his pantry, and his nurse. May you, my dear daughter, be long continued to be his comfort, and may his life be coeval with yours, that, at a very late period, you may both have such a retrospective view of life together as will excite a repeated tribute of praise. I need not say daily consecrate yourselves to God. Keep the mind heavenwards; let your friends see that you live upon the suburbs of the celestial kingdom. Do not let the world engross you in any degree. Whether it smile or frown, be alike indifferent to it. Conceive of it as it is, fleeting and uncertain. Take the refreshments provided for and suited to the pilgrim, but do not set up your rest where you should only bait. Prepare to meet your God. I hope to be regulated according to the advice I give. I have need; the full allotment of the life of man is pretty near its period, and decay discovers itself, if not so perceptible in the countenance; yet in the feeling of the loss of spirits and strength. Were I in the vigour of my days, inattention to the eternal state would be unallowable. How much more is it at threescore and five. But with all the infirmities and imperfections of nature, not to say sins, I can truly say, my desires are ever towards the Lord, and I would be on the constant look-out for my great change, and be daily waiting for my dismission, rather than be taken up with the trifles of sense —whatever consequence the world may give to them. Will the world ever be wiser than it is! Very weighty are the measures Providence is using to make it so. The judgments of the Lord are abroad in the earth, and our nation is like to feel the force of them. A great deal of distress now prevails. Failures in this neighbourhood are incessant. They who were considered wealthy are reduced to the greatest straits, and the trade that is carried on, is so depreciated, that it is asserted, the manufacturers cannot get a living profit. Such is the state of things, and consequently the poor feel exquisitely. My good wife is as well as may be expected, and so is Mrs. Tyler, to whom we are much indebted for her kind exertions. They unite in salutations to you and my son, from whom I shall be ever glad to receive a line. If he will commission you to use his pen, and you will accept the commission, it will be equally and very acceptable to, my ever dear daughter, your very affectionate father, C. W.

"*Painswick, Oct.* 16. 1807."

The other was addressed to Mrs. S——r, Birmingham, and was written only a month before his death.

"My dear friend,—It is so long since I wrote to you, that I am ashamed to think of it. You are nevertheless often in my mind, and I set you upon the list of my old friends. I am yet in life, yet in the house of God, yet engaged in the ministry of the word. But I am waiting for the change when I shall rank with perfect society in the world of blessedness, where we shall see no war, nor hear the sound of a trumpet, nor have hunger of bread, as is the case with many of our dear brethren on the Continent, and would have been as dreadfully so with us, if God had punished us as our sins deserve I am getting old and feeble. I am before my years in constitution, and have been ever since I was a child. So trying I find the ministry, and so many trials have I with my people, that I have been tempted to give it up. But yet I dare not. Be thou faithful unto death, is a peal in my ears, and turns the inclination of the mind. It has been the lot of others, as well as of myself, to have their labours defeated, and to be pained with the worst of all disappointments. A few years will deliver me from my pain and convey me to my rest, and I hope it will be found that however great the ground of my complaint is, that all the labour is not lost.—Our neighbourhood is and has been for some time a neighbourhood in affliction.—Mr. and Mrs. B——r are in the situation where I was at the hill, and I with my good old woman are at the brow of

the town, a very short distance from our place of worship, where we shut our eyes at the inconveniences we sustain, thankful for the conveniences we enjoy. My good wife is in cheerful blindness, desirous of inward illumination. Mrs. Tyler is as well as may be expected, passing her days in devotional retirement, and acting as far as she can in Mrs. Winter's stead. Both unite in affectionate salutations to you. Do you find increasing encouragement from your attention to the school! Do the walls of prejudice in any degree fall at L——d. Persevere, my dear friend, though under discouragement. Some good may arise from your endeavours that may diffuse itself to posterity. A little stream may convey downward a great mercy, and from your maintaining your ground, the barren wilderness may become a fruitful field. According to this idea I am led to keep my station. The work has derived but little advantage from me; may it greatly increase by the instrumentality of another, when I am in the grave. Wherever there is to be found one given of the Father, the Son will make his claim to him, and find him out, and according to this truth will be the success, or non-success, of the ministry. What news does B——m afford! Do the Miss W——'s appear benefited by the means of grace? Their being so will prove a great satisfaction to you, as the contrary will be your affliction. I hope Mr. W—— is prudent in his management of them, and that by his being near to God, he will communicate something to them that shall remain with them for ever. I hear different tidings from W——y, but I hope in the main the work of God is going forwards in both departments of the church in that place, notwithstanding the late awful instances of human depravity. —Do, my dear friend, let us hear from you soon. As I suppose Miss W—— is with you, I take the liberty to send my christian salutations by you, and remain, yours, affectionately, in our dear Lord Jesus, C. W.

"*Painswick, Nov.* 6, 1807."

CHAPTER II.

HIS SICKNESS AND DEATH.

Mr. Winter was much older in constitution than he was in age. His strength was never considerable; but for a length of time previous to his removal, he had been generally complaining, and frequently so indisposed as to render the discharge of his work trying and difficult.

December 13th, 1807, he exchanged pulpits with Mr. Jeary of Rodborough. This was the last Sabbath of his public ministry; and two things are observable. Here he preached his first sermon in Gloucestershire; and thus he ended his career in this county where he began it.—And his concluding discourse was 2 Corinthians v. 1. "For we know that if our earthly house of this Tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens."—The congregation was peculiarly impressed. Many said he seemed to be preaching his own funeral sermon.—So it proved.

He slept that night at Mr. Hogg's. In the morning he came to Mr. William Cooper's, Southfield-house, Woodchester, and offered, if agreeable, to spend the day, and take a bed with them. In the afternoon as Mr. Cooper was writing to the Editor, he wrote on one part of the sheet—

"My ever dear friend,—Though I have nothing particularly to communicate, I have wanted to write. A long silence is hardly consistent with the reciprocal regard that subsists between us. I sometimes hear of you that you are pretty well; sometimes that you are but indifferent. I hope the former is more generally the case. I rejoice in your acceptance; and trust the result of your labours is usefulness in all the variety for which the ministry is appointed. I wish I could give you a pleasing account of myself, but I cannot. My powers of late have been much shut up, like water frozen, rather than like a flowing stream. Indeed I have been very, very, very poorly, and when I am forced to preach, it is in a way that is very dissatisfying to myself. My voice fails me, and you may judge of a sermon that is without voice, as well as without energy of mind. But what is to be said of an exhausted candle? The lower it burns the dimmer the light. I have been tempted to give out, yet knowing that where I do not stand in the way of another I ought to stand as long as I am able; I resist the temptation hitherto. When you have an half hour's leisure let me hear from you, and give me all the good news you can. Yours ever, and very affectionately, in our dear Lord Jesus, C. W."

In the evening he seemed tolerably well, and prayed with his usual excellence. But in the night he was seized with a bilious fever; and though he came down in the morning, he was obliged to return to bed, and continued much afflicted all the day. In the evening of Tuesday, Mr. Payne, of Forest Green, visited him, and after an hour's interview and conversation, prayed with him. He said that his friend, who had peculiarly referred the issue of the affliction to the Lord's disposal, had precisely expressed his own wishes. Though the night was restless and painful, in the morning he rose and came down, and expressed a wish that was not to be diverted, to go home. His friend conveyed him to Painswick in his carriage, and Mrs. Cooper accompanied him. Before he left the house he said "I cannot leave you

ma'am, without my blessing." He kneeled down for the last time in this abode of friendship; but so exhausted was his strength, and so low was his voice that he could not be distinctly heard by the servants, who were more remote from him; and so overpowering was the effect of disease that he was scarcely able to say any thing all the way to his house. Yet after he reached home nothing seemed very alarming, and for some days the physician was not called in. During the week of his return he wrote to a friend: "I was arrested in my progress, and brought home a prisoner. I write from my bed to inform you of it. I did not know on Tuesday morning but I should have seen the Judge of all. I have no prospect of coming abroad soon. The Lord sanctify all his dispensations, and it will be well with us, however severe they be."

Hence on the 28th, he wrote the following note to William Cooper, Esq.

"My dear sir,—By a poor man who stops a few hours at Mr. Hillman's, I thought it right to drop you and Mrs. Cooper a line: it only expresses the grateful sense of your kindness to me, not only during my confinement at your hospitable mansion, but for conveying me home. I have been a prisoner ever since, but it appears the hour of release is approaching; and, I hope, if no relapse comes, on Sabbath day to resume my services in the congregation. I have reason to be thankful for a mind kept in perfect peace, and for such visits of mercy as amount to an indication that the Lord has not been dealing with me in anger. Oh, my dear sir, how desirable it is to be weaned from this world, and to die to it, before we are called to die out of it. Reason and religion concur to remind me that I cannot be long here: a respite I may have, a reprieve I cannot expect; that which sin has made terrible, the redeeming love of the Lord Jesus has made delightful.

"To die is gain, and to be kept at a distance from death is therefore in reality a disadvantage—but it is not without its accommodation to them who live unto the Lord. That you and Mrs. Cooper may be richly accommodated with grace till you are meetened for glory, is the prayer of, my dear sir, yours, in the bonds of the gospel, C. W."

"Mr. Jay bears in mind his obligations to you, and, *Deo volente*, intends performing his promise. Kind respects to Mrs. Wilks, and hope Mrs. Butler is in merciful circumstances."

Before we quite leave Woodchester, and to anticipate a little for the sake of avoiding repetition—The mansion that had entertained the deceased a few weeks before, welcomed the Editor when he went to attend his funeral solemnities. This circumstance produced what is here inserted, and which would not have been made thus public, had it not been to gratify a friendly request. It was impromptu; the sudden unstudied language of the heart, which it was deemed unfair to alter.

Written, and left in the chamber in which Mr. Winter was seized for death, at the house of William Cooper, Esq. Woodchester.

And was it in this house of peace,
Of friendship and of love,
Winter, the Man of God, receiv'd
His summons from above?

With lamp well trim'd and burning bright,
And loins begirt around,
In waiting posture long he stood,
To hear the welcome sound.

Born from above, and thither bent,
And longing for the skies;
How sweet the voice that met him *here*,
And softly said, "Arise!"

And, ripe for bliss, to him ere now
This call had long been given—
But he, the joy of doing good
On earth, preferr'd to heaven.

The world, the church, the young, the poor,
Ah! these detained him here—
For us he pray'd, he preach'd, he liv'd,
And pour'd the friendly tear.

Hence, wing'd for heaven, he linger'd still
Nor was in haste to fly—
But having taught us how to live,
Would teach us how to die.

"My Father," cried Elisha, when
Elijah left the earth—
And thou hast claims to filial love,
As strong as those of birth.

A son of thine, dear saint, here kneels,
Thy shining flight to trace;
And bless'd, could he thy mantle catch,
And share but half thy grace.

When Jacob on his journey slept,
And saw the ladder near;
The top of which e'en pierced the sky,
And God was standing there;

"How dreadful is this place," he cried,
How sacred is the ground!
I here have seen the house of God,
The gate of glory found."

Inmates! or guests! whoe'er you are
That in this room may lie,
Remember—*here* our Winter *slept*,
And here *began* to *die*.

To return to Painswick—He had collections of his papers brought to him, and inspected them, destroying, as well as preserving many. He remarked, that it was unreasonable for him to give his surviving friends so much trouble. It would appear, from hence, that he deemed the time of his departure was drawing on, even though he might be permitted to visit the house of God again. What the state of his mind now was, the following letter will discover.—The Editor sets a peculiar value upon it, because it was not only the last that he received from his ever dear

and honoured friend, but also the last that was written by him.

"My very dear friend,—The morning after I wrote to you I was seized with a cold shivering, followed with a violent bilious fever, and this attended with an inflammation in my right leg, from which I have not the least relief. The fever continues to lurk in me, and I am a complete invalid. Hitherto I have had such pulpit help as the neighbourhood affords, but it is too inconsiderable. I have an inclination to make an effort to come abroad next Lord's-day, but it is very doubtful whether I shall be able, but if I do, I fear I shall not be capable of collecting matter that will be a stay to me, so barren is my mind and inadequate to fixed thought. I have been a long time out of order, and my limbs exceedingly affected by every little damp which has come to them. My mind amidst all is calm and placid, and I am desirous that the will of the Lord may be done in the issue. We are sure the Lord does that which is right, and however exercised we may be with pain, it becomes us to live in the exercise of submission. What if this be the presage of dissolution? I hope to consider it the presage of release from sin and its effects; and that, through the grace of our adorable Jesus, I shall attain to the full salvation which his sufferings and death have made sure. I am pleased at the good account you give of William. May you escape the pain arising from undutiful children, and have all the blessings arising from obedience and affection. My love to Mrs. Jay and the family. I am, my very dear friend, affectionately yours, in our dear Lord Jesus, C. W.

"*Painswick, Dec.* 32, 1807."

This was written in bed; and being finished, the hand, which the writing proved was beginning to forget her cunning, laid down the pen for ever.

The relapse of the disorder increased its violence, and seemed to threaten mortification in the right leg. His friends had now every reason to fear the result, and if prayers and tears would have retained him, "Our brother had not died."

There would have been nothing unsatisfactory if the life of such a man had closed in silence. We are prone to lay too much stress on a few dying expressions.—Yet the words of departing saints are precious.—They convince and they encourage.

Such stupefaction did the last stages of the disorder produce, that the dear deceased had not many intervals in which he could command the use of his reason. His benign and venerable countenance was viewed with the most sympathetic interest, while he was sleeping away the hours that kept him from the joy of his Lord.

Even his mild and gentle rambles were all in character with the man; and each lucid moment was filled up with prayer, thanksgiving, and friendship. He often mentioned his connexions by name, attended with some devotional expression. Every time he took refreshment, or medicine, he verbally implored the divine blessing. On the Wednesday night previous to his dissolution, being asked by his nurse how he was, he replied, "I am a little languid, but I bless God that he has brought me thus far, in such an easy manner." Soon after he desired the three first chapters of the Epistle to the Philippians, to be read to him. He paid particular regard to those passages that speak of ministers and people in their relation to each other. He said, "He had laboured for the young, but feared he had not been very useful; yet he hoped the good effect of it would hereafter appear."

He said, "If God were to refer the event of the affliction to me, I would refer it to him again. I feel to this world as a weaned child."

On Friday one of his brethren, Mr. Bishop, of Gloucester, visited him. When told that he was come, he lifted up his eyes and hands with surprise and pleasure. Mr. Bishop said to him, "I hope, sir, that you are happy?" He replied, "Yes." His friend added, "It is but a short step from earth to heaven:" with a feeble, but distinct voice, he echoed, "A short step," and then added, "I have sought the divine glory more than my own interest. I am closing life as I began it." His eyelids then fell—his voice ceased—and death seemed rapidly approaching.

Many acknowledgments of a similar nature were uttered, which, as is too common in these cases, the attendants did not secure at the season, and could not accurately recover afterwards. Indeed the affectionate and devoted creatures significantly remarked, they "Did not know that one thing he said was better than another; it was all alike—so heavenly—it was heaven to be with him."

The Sabbath was now come that was to end in the rest that remains for the people of God. In the morning he prayed, "Lord, bless and unite my people." Soon after, he suddenly cried out, "He is my salvation, he is all my salvation." About eleven o'clock he exclaimed, "I am ready, I am ready, I want to go home." Soon after, when one of his friends looked upon him, and asked him how he did? He replied, "Like a dying man; may the Lord bless you, and your family." He inquired, as some of the family returned from worship, the state of the congregation, and was pleased to learn that it was large.

A little before eight in the evening he said, "Tell my good wife, I am going." He then stretched himself out, laid his arms at length upon his body, and indistinctly said, "Come Lord Jesus;" and without a groan, fell asleep.

Tuesday morning, January the 19th, was the period appointed for his interment. For several hours before the service began, numbers were assembled together. More than thirty ministers, of various denominations, were present on the solemn occasion. While the coffin was within view of the congregation, Mr. Bishop, of Gloucester, delivered a funeral sermon from the character given of Hannaniah, "He was a faithful man, and feared God above many." The reflections were as interesting as the text was pertinent. As soon as his remains were laid in the vault beneath the pulpit; a very able and characteristical address was delivered by Mr. Jones, of Chalford.

Few services were ever so affecting. The place was a Bochim, a place of weeping.—Painful as it is to attend such a scene, there is a kind of melancholy pleasure blending with it. To mingle with a multitude drawn together, not by curiosity, not by the ostentatious pageantry of death, but by esteem and attachment; to witness unequivocal, as well as numerous proofs of departed worth; to see one turning aside to heave a sigh, another raising his streaming eyes to heaven; to hear, as you withdrew, the short but significant eulogiums from many a quivering lip,—"Ah! he *was* a good man."—"I have lost a friend *indeed*."—"I shall never find *his* like again."—Yes—all this affords a mournful satisfaction. And what attendant will ever forget the mixture of grief and gratification he suffered and enjoyed when this man of God was carried to his long home? Few men were ever adapted to inspire an affection at once so powerful and tender. There are characters we venerate, that we can hardly be said to love. The apostle has made a difference between the impression produced by righteousness and goodness: "For scarcely for a righteous man will one die, yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. It is goodness that makes one man a god to another; we are only to be won by kindness: they are the cords of love, by which hearts are irresistibly drawn, and indissolubly bound together.

Who, therefore, that knew Mr. Winter, can wonder at the sensibility his loss produced. The intercourse of the friends that assembled in his own house previously to the funeral, was carried on by looks and tears, rather than words. When the procession came out of his dwelling, the spectators that lined the street, all melted into emotions of grief. When the corpse entered the chapel, and when it was laid low in the dust, the audience could hardly be restrained within the bounds of decency—all seemed to feel and to verify the words of our great moralist, "The blameless life, the artless tenderness, the pious simplicity, the modest resignation, the patient sickness, the quiet death, are remembered only to add value to the loss, and to deepen sorrow for what cannot be recalled."

Many who never heard him, came to bedew his grave. Persons of religious sentiments, widely different from his own, opened their houses to accommodate those who came from a distance. The rector, with a liberality of mind, and tenderness of heart, that did him honour, apologized for his inability to attend, as he expressed it, "The funeral of the ever to be lamented Mr. Winter." Attendants who had waited upon him; the driver at the inn who had carried him to his house, when he fractured his bone, the coachman that had drove him home, when he was seized for death at the house of his friend—all seemed glad to remember, and to divulge, any little kindness they had shown him.

Two very impressive sermons were preached in the evening of the day, by Mr. Lowell and Mr. Thorp, of Bristol; and on the following Sabbath, all the ministers in Gloucestershire agreed to improve the Providence in their own congregations. This was done also by his students, and by several ministers in other countries. Two only of these discourses were published,* but the number would have been considerably enlarged, had it not been from a needless delicacy with regard to the intended publication of his life.

Mr. Winter was only turned of sixty-five; but his looks and walk had even long before, led many to suppose that he was much more advanced in age. His person was rather above the middle stature. He was inclinable to corpulency. His face was marked with the small pox, but not disagreeably so. His eye was uncommonly mild and risible. His countenance was all benign.

There is no very good likeness of him. That in the Evangelical Magazine did him no justice; that in the Theological, disgraced him. The image of his placid and heavenly features will long remain in many a fond memory. May the image of his character remain longer still, and be more vividly recalled—especially by those that enjoyed the advantage of his tuition. May it be present with them alone, and in company: in the family and in the church; may they be followers of him as dear children!

An extract containing the preface to his will, may gratify his friends.

"In the name of God, Amen. I, Cornelius Winter, of Painswick, in the county of Gloucester, minister of the gospel, being of sound disposing mind, memory, and understanding, thanks unto the Lord for the same, do make this my last will and testament, as follows; that is to say, I commit my soul into the hands of God, gratefully acknowledging his discriminating grace, of which he made me an early

* The one by Mr. Bishop, of Gloucester; the other by Mr. Golding, of Fulwood, who had been one of his second class of pupils.

partaker, and by which I escaped many temporal and moral evils, and have had life sweetened, and the trials of it rendered supportable. Whenever it pleases him to call me, I would die in a humble, but firm, confidence in Jesus, as my Redeemer; renouncing all pretensions to merit, in any thing I have done, lamenting the imperfections of which I am conscious, and many which my understanding has not discovered, in hope of a blessed resurrection with his redeemed people, in the day when they shall be gathered together, &c.

CHAPTER III.

VIEWS OF HIS CHARACTER.

To consider Mr. Winter personally and relatively, in private and in public life; to give, if not a finished portrait, yet a sketch of his leading features, so as to enable the reader to distinguish and estimate his worth —is the design of this part of our subject. And if the power of representation were always the same with the possession of knowledge, the Editor might hope to succeed; having had from domestic residence, and the most unreserved intercourse and correspondence, peculiar opportunities of acquaintance and observation.

Let us first glance at Mr. Winter's TALENTS and ACQUISITIONS.

He was not possessed of first-rate natural endowments; but it is equally certain that he claimed a considerable degree of mental superiority. His apprehension was quick, his judgment was accurate; and his imagination, though not vigorous and bold, was fertile and ready. No one could more nicely or instantaneously discriminate the defects or excellencies of a performance; but his candour and self-diffidence generally repressed the declaration of his sentiments. If genius be used in a limited and rather modern sense of the word, as denoting peculiarity and individuality of thought and expression, Mr. Winter had a considerable claim to it. He always lamented the want of memory. It might be supposed, that a man must be certainly conscious whether he is really deficient in this faculty or habit. Yet I am persuaded the complaint is too general, and helps much to produce the effect it bewails. The memory, like a friend, loves to be trusted, and rewards confidence. No man will be satisfied who measures his power of retention by his wishes: and the memory should not be censured because it does not lodge every thing it meets with, and which would produce superfluity and confusion.—The goodness of it very much consists in an instinctive property, by which it throws off what is needless and unsuitable, and applies only what is pertinent and necessary. And this was the case, at least, in a great degree, with Mr. Winter: whether writing or speaking he never seemed at a loss for what the occasion required, either to confirm or illustrate his subject.

With regard to his learning it has already appeared that he was destitute of a classical education, and began his ministry under very great disadvantages. Though this could not be considered as his fault, he felt it as his affliction; and never resembled those who depreciate what they do not possess, and are not willing to acquire. Never did a man more value erudition, in all its various branches, and for all its legitimate purposes; never did a man strive more patiently and laboriously to gain literature. And his acquisitions, considered in connexion with his circumstances, were eminent. He had more than a competent knowledge of the original languages, and read the Scriptures in them. He well understood the Latin tongue,* and made proficiency in the French. His acquaintance with general science, though not profound, was extensive. He knew no luxury so great as a book: his reading was constant and diversified.

Let us, secondly, notice him as a TUTOR.

Here we have to view him as the master of a school, and as the president of an academy. Nothing could have been more unexpected than his introduction to each of these kinds of tuition.

For several years, while at Marlborough, he had the care of youth intended for civil life. The number of boarders was never very large, but this was not for want of applications, which he found it difficult to reject. With what views and dispositions he attended to this branch of duty; and how anxious he was, while qualifying them for secular stations, to train them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, appears from the following extract of a letter written to the father of one of his first pupils. "No pains shall be wanting to prepare him for a life of usefulness. The care of youth should be conscientiously undertaken; and though I find it, with my ministerial services, a life of great labour, I can truly say, I set myself to it with a deal of cheerfulness. It may in some sort be considered as an observation of our dear Lord's command, 'Feed my lambs.' If we attend to them wholly, that is, to their souls as well as to their bodies, they will not admit of our living an idle life. Happy they, who, in whatever line of duty the Providence of God places them, are enabled to perform the part of a wise steward. You as well as myself, and all who profess the religion of the dear Lord Jesus, are under an obligation to fill up our place with a regard to his glory: but we shall meet with many impediments, and they are not to be surmounted but by watchfulness and prayer. May we continue in these sa-

* The Editor has in his possession his Latin correspondence with Professor Warren, of Lingen, in Westphalia, during the residence of one of his pupils under his care.

cred exercises; and be sure to connect thanksgiving with them for all the mercies of our lives. Many of these lie concealed under trials and disappointments; yea, many of them consist of these very things: they may be grevious to be borne, but they will prove profitable in the end."

The pupil whom the letter concerns, in transmitting it, referring to "The happy period" of his being placed under his care, writes "I say *happy* because though at the tender age of only eight years, my memory still records many instances of his more than parental kindness; and I trust his affectionate solicitude for the promotion of my best interests, has had a salutary influence upon my subsequent conduct and character." I cannot refuse inserting—"Return the letters I have sent as soon as possible. They will often afford me a melancholy pleasure in the review; and enable me to enjoy a sort of mental converse with the ever to be lamented writer, though he has passed the confines of mortality." This is only one instance of the obligation and attachment felt and acknowledged by numbers more.

In teaching the young, that which is so requisite, is not a vastness of talent, but a peculiarity of disposition. It is a temper compounded of affection and patience; it is a temper that blends mildness with firmness, and inspires rather than commands; it is a temper that, like the genial rays of spring, warms, revives, opens,—not like the stern severity of the winter-day that chills, freezes, and binds; it is a temper that will not produce timidity by eagerness of importunity, or confusion by hastiness of censure; a temper that will prevent discouragement in reaching a remote distance by not discovering too much at once; and that teaches the receiver as he is able to bear it.

Some have supposed that it was the design of our Lord to furnish a motive rather than a model, when he said, "Learn of me for I am meek and lowly in heart." As if he had said, "Be not afraid to place yourselves under my tuition; my condescension equals my ability; I will bear with your weaknesses; and my gentleness shall make you great." Never had a human being so much of this qualification as Mr. Winter. And this appeared in another and a higher department of education.

In training up young men for the work of the ministry, he did not precisely conform to the common method of education in the seminaries of Protestant Dissenters. It could hardly be deemed necessary. He seldom had more than three or four at the same time. The formalities of an academy would of course be much dispensed with, and conversation and reading supply a series of lectures. He was a father with his sons, rather than a tutor with his students. They were almost constantly with him; he was always familiarly instructing them; and the love he inspired was such as to endear every thing he said. Whether they were walking in the field, or sitting in the house; at the fire-side in the evening, or at the table at meals, improvement was blended with pleasure. Reading always attended the hours of breakfast and tea, intermingled with remarks derived from the subject. It was no unusual thing for one of his students to accompany him in his visits to the chamber of sickness, and the house of mourning: he knew that young men should be sober-minded; and that by the sadness of the countenance, the heart is made better. To prepare them for social and edifying intercourse, they also frequently attended him in his friendly visits. They sometimes joined him in his preaching excursions. There are few things in my life that I can remember with so much melting pleasure, as my going with him—walking by the side of his little horse, and occasionally riding—on a fine summer's evening, into a neighbouring village, and returning again the same night, or very early in the morning. In these instances I was required to take sometimes a part, and sometimes the whole of the service; but it was a privilege rather than a task, to do any thing before him. He heard our discourses and prayers with the greatest tenderness, and beamed with pleasure at every presage of improvement. A backwardness to notice imperfections was his extreme; he loved to commend; it was hardly in his power to find fault. Yet though his approbation seemed easily gained, it was not rendered the less desirable. It was delicious to enjoy it, and therefore it always supplied a stimulus.

He engaged his students to preach very early after they were with him. This arose partly from the state of the neighbourhood, which wanted help. Souls were perishing for lack of knowledge, and they who could not as yet hope for acceptance in large and polite audiences were able to show the way of salvation to those who were generally more deficient than themselves. But I believe it also resulted from his conviction of the propriety of the measure, independent of this necessity. He imagined the sooner the young men began, the more facility and confidence they would acquire; and that it would be less embarrassing and discouraging to commence before all their deficiencies were known, than to start with the full disclosure: that it was better for them to encounter difficulties one by one, as they became sensible of them, than to begin trembling under their united impression. It is to be remembered also, that they officiated at first only in private places, and rustic congregations. It unquestionably gave them advantages as preachers; but it broke in upon their studies as pupils. Some of the villages they served were at a considerable distance:

their traveling occupied their time, and its engagements diverted their attention. Upon the whole, and after mature reflection, I should prefer the method he adopted to any other. It tended to keep the heart in the things of God, and to preserve the savour of religion on the mind, which it is well known, is easily destroyed, where all the studies are purely intellectual, and several young men of vivacity and emulation are blended together.

And the preservation of spirituality is of great importance where the office is sacred: of this Mr. Winter never lost sight. He was always feeding and cherishing the piety, as well as promoting the literary improvement of those who were under his care. He constantly reminded them of the absolute necessity of personal religion; and endeavoured to keep alive a sense of their dependence on God, for the preservation and the increase of their powers, and the success of their applications and exertions. Often when we have been perfectly alone, and were going to read even a book on general subjects only, he has prayed a few moments himself, or required me to do it; and I have no doubt but all his students can testify the same practice in their private intercourse with him individually. Indeed if nothing of this kind was engaged in formally, it was impossible not to feel devoutly while near him: his presence was the very element of piety.

To illustrate this kind of attention which he paid as a tutor, I shall introduce a few extracts from his letters. If I take them from his correspondence with me, while I was more immediately his charge, it is not to insinuate that his regards were less peculiar towards others, but because I am only possessed of materials to exemplify his pious care in this one instance.

"Dear Billy,—Among the various things which employ my thoughts, your coming to Marlborough is one. I hope in time it will be brought about, and that you will pray for the blessing of God upon our designs and endeavours. You will not forget the object we have in view—it is to prepare you for, and to introduce you into the service of the sanctuary; in which service that you act properly, and shine to the glory of God, and be useful to your fellow-mortals, it is necessary that you should be devotedly given up in heart and life to God himself. If you are not really converted yourself, you will talk very awkwardly about conversion to others. If you do not love Jesus, you will want a most powerful constraint to preach him as the only Lord God and Saviour. Pray therefore for a renewed heart, if you have it not already; and for a growth in grace, if that divine principle is already implanted.—Then you will enter all upon necessary studies like a devoted and dependent youth whose every moment will discover holiness to the Lord. You will then be prepared to partake of the afflictions of the gospel, and enjoy the spiritual and temporal blessings God may graciously confer upon you to his praise. I am, my dear Billy, your affectionate friend, C. W.

"*Marlborough, January* 21, 1785."

The above is part of the first letter I ever received from him.

In another, dated Bristol, Tuesday night, (past eleven o'clock,) he writes—

"Your way to Tisbury seems open. On the 1st of October, if life and health are spared, you are appointed to preach the unsearchable riches of Christ, in the village where you first drew your breath, and often since have evidenced yourself to be a sinner. Indulge suitable meditation, and pray that you may go with a holy caution upon your spirit, fearing lest while you preach to others, you yourself should be cast away. By the thought that this may be the case, I am awakened out of my sleepy frame, and exhort you, my dear youth, on no consideration to take up with preaching merely as a science; enter upon it as a work of the last importance, and in the discharge of it, respect your own salvation, as well as the salvation of those who hear you. I do not write as suspecting your sincerity, but as knowing the depravity of the human heart, I warn you. On my journey, I have been examining my heart, and reviewing my conduct, and have found myself very deficient in exhorting and praying with you. I hope when you return, to amend this omission, and trust you will be the better for it; neither be presumptuous nor too diffident, but go on praying and depending on the Lord Jesus, and may he be with you. Meet my wishes with your endeavours, and you will find me to be yours, very affectionately, &c."

In another, dated Bristol, November 3, 1778:

"It gave me great pleasure to hear from you yesterday. I have not time to write to you in Latin, nor indeed much in English. I am happy to hear all is well at home, and much desire to be with you.—I pray the exercise of your soul may be sanctified to you, and that by every means you may be kept humble at the feet of Jesus. O my dear Billy, be clothed with humility, and you will then be happy and useful. God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace to the humble. Many kind inquiries are made after you."

In another, dated Marlborough, July 4, 1788:

"I am breaking off from the sermon I am

composing for Mr. Hancock's funeral, who was buried yesterday, on purpose to drop you a line. Ever since I received yours, I have been in hurry and confusion. I am absolutely going from Marlborough, and have a fair prospect of settling at Painswick, in Gloucestershire. There I shall be glad to see you, and as often as may be convenient and prudent, will exchange pulpits with you. You are much upon my heart, and I think upon you with joy, with fear, and trembling. You must expect enemies, and look for persons who will not take a little pains to invalidate your labours. I have had information of the advice Mr. Cecil gave you; it was truly important, and equally true the remark he made at the same time. Let nobody spend an afternoon with you, nor do you spend so much time with any one, if you can help it. Be sure to preserve some time for attending to Latin and Greek; and by carrying your wits about you, get a knowledge of men and things, as well as pay a close application to books. Preserve your modesty, and walk with great caution and circumspection. I wish I was at your elbow, I could say many things I cannot enter upon now. Time forbids my enlarging. May God keep and smile upon you, and cause all grace to abound towards you."

In another, dated Burford, July 9, 1788:

"I DARE say you received my short line by Mr. Stump. I wish I could have written to you more largely and explicitly, but the hurry I have been in all the last week is scarcely to be conceived of. I have had two providential opportunities to hear of you, and am thankful to hear you are acceptable; I hope the Lord will continue to make you daily so, and keep you low and humble before him! You will want a great deal of wisdom, and had need ply hard to all kinds of studies which are subservient to the ministry, and immediately connected with it. Prayer, much prayer to God, is of great consequence to you. Keep as much as you can, from contracting epistolary correspondence. Let your letters be as few as possible; yet here you had need be careful, lest you should overlook essential friendship. Pay all due respect to ———, and keep a very close tongue. I preached Mr. Hancock's funeral sermon, on last Lord's day, in the afternoon. If I could help it, I would go no more to Marlborough. O that you could meet with some godly young man to fill up my place there! My heart aches for the people, though they have used me so very ill. I hope God will provide for them, and not suffer them to be given up.—I hope when you return, the country will afford you much comfort and opportunity for study, and that opportunity will be well improved. I am at present exercised with many trials, and hope they will be sanctified. If you can entertain me with any little news, do. God bless you, &c."

In another, dated Marlborough, July 29, 1788:

"IF you really have performed your appointment for Mr. Hill, I would advise you to attend to no farther invitations, but leave London immediately. Come into the country to pray and reflect, and wherever you go, set the picture of your mortality before you; and consider that he who has raised you can sink you, and will, unless you give him the glory of the gifts he has given to you. You will take this hint kind; it intends no reflection. Write, or come to Painswick, when you can, and by the first opportunity. I long for a little quietude and retirement, but above all, for that which will come in due time. Till then I hope for grace to persevere in every Christian duty, and to prove myself, by every means in my power, yours, &c."

In another, dated Wotton, September 7, 1788:

"I A little indulged the hope of seeing you last week, but I acknowledge it proceeded more from a kind parental fondness than from a hope founded in reason. I hope you are well, and busily gathering store into your hive from the various flowers upon which you light. May all savour of grace, and terminate in the glory of the great and good God, whom to serve, I trust we shall never cease; and of whose service, I pray we may never be weary till we are stretched in our coffins. Since God has given you ability for his good work, keep yourself at liberty for, and in it. I bless myself in my heart, that you are out of London. If I was to study your reputation, more than the glory of God, I would advise you to take the same steps; but as the glory of God is concerned, and your eye is single to it, I more confidently rejoice. I do not wish you to spend your days in Christian-malford, at the same time I am glad it is a retreat for you. The idea of a young man grasping at lucrative baits, is contemptible, and I suspect the gospel has not suffered a little from such instances; on the other hand, neglect of wealth, indifference to it, and preferment given to poverty and obscurity, puts lustre upon a religious character, especially with popular gifts; profane history gives us many and striking instances of what I say. And we cannot speak with weight upon divine things; but as our practice confirms our doctrine."

In another, dated Painswick, May 8, 1789:

"Wonder not that I have not written to you before. My heart and my hands have been full, and though I have often thought of you, I have lost you in a cloud, which I hoped Providence would disperse. I doubted not but that I should find you again, and that my bowels would be refreshed by thee. How glad am I that it is your design to be at Painswick, my prison, my palace of pleasure and of praise, next Thursday. Pray start immediately after breakfast, and be not surprised if you meet me in lord Ducie's wood, or on Selsley. Somewhere, I will strive to meet you, if the weather be not very foul. Then, if I can, I will tell you how I was bereaved of dear Thomas. I feel under the Providence, but am not miserable. He was an idol torn from me, and I yield him up, from a conviction I have done wrong, and God has done right. Do not omit to improve upon it. God has given you a tongue, and an early commission to use it; let the heart dictate to it, and may the Spirit dictate to the heart. Live while you live; it is but a little while you have to live. 'Work while it is called to-day; the night cometh when no man can work.' With an heart enlarged to you beyond what words can express, I am, &c."

In another, dated Painswick, Nov. 21, 1789:

"It is a pleasure to know where to direct to you. Were it not to you it would be no pleasure to write, for I am tired. I long to see you, not for the sake of hearing news, but because I love you. What a noise have you made in the world! How many eyes are upon you. How many hearts fear for you! How many envy you!—I hope you are in the possession of heavenly enjoyments, and walking comfortably in the good ways of God. These are your best days, make much of them, and by your indifference to yourself, and that holy negligence which is a bright ornament, and necessary to blunt the edge of even kind suspicion, show that you can be popular without being proud. The church as well as the world looks with a jealous eye upon the young minister of the day, and especially upon those who have no paternal property to support gay appearance.—Mr. Thornton, in a letter of Thursday, says, 'The prevalent attention to dress and outward appearance feeds the pride, and ruins more than half our young ministers. Even awkwardness, if it tends to humble them, is desirable; for what is more odious than a finical, conceited, dressed up, young minister, that thinks he is the mighty orator. I would never wish ministers to be slovenly, but I had rather see them in worsted hose, than in nice silk stockings, and would prefer such as drink water and small liquors, to those who cannot do without wine and spirits.' I write not this to reproach you, but as my most dearly beloved, to caution and warn you. I know you will take it as an evidence of my right to subscribe myself, ever yours, affectionately, &c."

I have taken an extract or two from letters addressed to me after my removal from him. I could have added to their number greatly; for his fatherly care never declined. When his students left him, he followed them with his prayers and advice; he watched over them with a godly jealousy, and cautioned, warned, exhorted, encouraged them, according as their circumstances required. They were always welcome to his house as visitants; and nothing could afford him greater delight than to see any of them in his pulpit, and to witness the fruit of his labours. He has often been seen standing the whole sermon with eager attention, and pleasure glistening through his tears.

I would only add that he was peculiarly attentive to the behaviour and manners of his young men. No person ever valued more than he did, the moralities and proprieties of life in all its relations and conditions. This is not always the case. Some of those who are very zealous for what they call the power of godliness, trample upon its external forms, and circumstantial appendages, which yet are often, not only ornamental, but highly useful. Taken up with great things they overlook little ones; not considering that what is little in one view, may be great in another; that what is little in its abstract being, may be great in its consequences, and its connexions. In this view it is hardly possible to know what is unimportant, especially in moral conduct, and in public office. Are there no instances to be found of characters whose excellency has been obscured, and whose usefulness has been injured—perhaps, ruined, by little levities, familiarities, indulgences, and inconsistencies, which the severest casuist could not construe into positive crime! But it has been said with equal truth and beauty, "That the character of a minister is like that of a female: to be suspected, is almost as bad as to be guilty."* A feather discovers the direction of the wind as well as a tree. Our Lord in sending forth his twelve apostles and seventy disciples issued a variety of maxims and admonitions, which, were they to be delivered now at the ordination of even a young Evangelist, would be deemed trifling. It was the advice of Solomon, "Let thine eyes look straight on:"—"Ponder the path of thy feet, and thy goings shall be established."

Upon these principles Mr. Winter entered into the detail of practice; and adduced instances to exemplify the defects of the ex-

* Clayton's charge at the ordination of Mr. Brookbanks.

cellencies he described. It was an object with him to teach them how to appear in the parlour as well as the pulpit. He did not think it unnecessary to guard them against superfluous wants, and unseemly customs—against the sottish and offensive habit of smoking; against giving trouble where they happened to lodge; against keeping up the family beyond their usual time of repose; against inexactness in keeping them waiting at meals; against the use of spirituous liquors; against fondness for delicacies. He did not think it needless to regulate their deportment towards servants, suggesting the propriety of noticing them, as well as the heads of the family in morning and evening devotion. It will be naturally concluded that he did not leave them uninstructed in their relation to female society. He minutely specified the prudence that must guide them in the design of marriage; and taught them to maintain the sacred obligations arising from choice and engagement. Nothing offended him more than the versatility of some young preachers, who seem to think they have a right to trifle as they please with the affections and characters of those they address.

He knew that a minister's acceptance and usefulness, depended as much upon conduct as upon talent; and therefore as a tutor he knew that he could not discharge his office by teaching them how to decline and conjugate; how to find a word in the root and follow it in the ramifications; how to form a syllogism or argue without it; how to form a style, and use the figures of rhetoric, without turning their attention minutely, morally and practically upon themselves:—so that they should leave him able to compose a sermon, but not to form a character; filled with science and empty of wisdom: to vapour through life with scraps of Latin and Greek, instead of being wise as serpents and harmless as doves.

Let us not, thirdly, pass over him as A MINISTER.

He was a scribe well instructed in the kingdom of God, and like a householder he brought forth out of his treasure, things new and old. He had a vast fund of scriptural and experimental knowledge; and few ever furnished so great a variety of important reflections as he produced in his ordinary ministrations. There was no sameness in his discourses. I never remember to have heard a repetition of the same illustration, or even the same phraseology. The principles he taught were those which he originally received when he heard the gospel to purpose. His conviction of the truth, and the importance of them, strengthened with his years. Hence in a sermon he published in 1792, he affirms, "I am so far from repenting that I ever embraced them, and from being ashamed that I have propagated them as an itinerant and a stated minister, that I shall be glad to subscribe to them with my dying hand, and testify to them with my expiring breath." To him, they appeared not only as the distinguishing doctrines, but the peculiar glory of revelation. He regarded them as affording the grand desideratum of the state of man, as a guilty, depraved, and helpless creature. They had the most holy and happy influence upon himself; and he saw that, as they are denied or suppressed, religion languishes for want of life, and the fruits of morality and good works sink and shrivel, if they do not immediately drop off the branches.

Yet he did not preach these systems systematically and doctrinally, so much as in their experimental and practical bearings and results. He was most strictly evangelical, if that means to preach—that we are saved by grace, through faith and that not of ourselves; that Christ has once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us unto God; that in him we have righteousness and strength; that his sheep hear his voice, and shall never perish; that every moral duty is to be enforced by christian motives.

But he would not separate principle from practice; he would not treat doctrines as naked, cold, angry propositions; he would not be always harping upon two or three favourite topics, and shun a large proportion of the gospel scheme; he would not confine his motion to a circle, like a blind horse going round in a mill, or feed like an ass tethered in a paddock; but went over the whole land of revelation, in the length and breadth of it.

Neither would he pervert the plain and true meaning of Scripture, in order to accommodate himself to the taste of a sound, or rather sickly audience. In a letter to a friend, he has freely expressed himself upon this exceptionable practice. "In our last conversation I believe you misunderstood me. I have no treatise upon friendship; and only intended to say something upon it in my extemporary way, from Proverbs xvii. 17—'A friend loveth at all times.' Some were displeased; the reason is because I did not violate the text, and strike out a doctrine from it, as foreign to the design of Solomon in giving it, as the northern and southern poles are to each other. Morality, though introduced in its proper order, and fixed in its proper place, is very disgraceful to some of our evangelical hearers, who are very far from being the moral men themselves. They are never pleased with any thing, but that which whips up their frothy passions to a very strong head; and those are the best preachers in their estimation, who bring the whisk with them into the pulpit, and meet not their true state, but their inclination. Destitute of voice, memory, fancy, and above

all, of a wish to make a nose of wax of the text, I have not been popular; if in any degree I have been useful, God shall have the glory of my usefulness, and I will take to myself the shame of all my defects. I am getting pretty far in life, and am seized with indispositions common to most old men. They do me no harm, though they put me to pain, I have had my weaning, and am weaned."

Never was there a man more condescending and accommodating where duty called, than Mr. Winter, but he would not stoop to vulgar *tricks;* he never *courted* popularity; especially where the acquisition involves censure, rather than confers praise. He would no more sacrifice his judgment than his conscience, in letting himself down to a taste which he knew he ought to endeavour to raise: if he could not correct it, he would bear with it, but would never indulge it, never sanction it. Much might have been done in reforming some abuses, if all ministers had followed his example. While classes of hearers, remarkable for their captiousness, and ignorance, meet with preachers that seek to pay homage to them, either from love or fear they will feel themselves of importance.

But little of the impression he made as a public speaker, was derived from his manner of address. He was venerable in the pulpit, not striking. He had no action. His voice was not very clear or powerful; his utterance was rather slow and inanimated.

He frequently preached without notes; but more generally he wrote a short skeleton; and sometimes of late years read his whole sermon.

Various are the ways of discussing texts. The *Essay* mode: this indeed can hardly be said to treat a text at all, and was probably introduced for the sake of brevity, or as the indignant extreme of the endless multiplicity of heads, and particulars that formerly prevailed. The *Expository:* which explains a portion of Scripture as it lies, intermixed with practical addresses, in the process, and sometimes closed with general reflections in the review. The *Observational:* which peculiarly applies to historical passages, and contains a succession of remarks, founded upon circumstances which require improvement rather than explication. The *Characteristical:* which takes for its subject the narrative of an individual, and holds it up to view, marking its prominent features, to excite admiration or aversion. The *Topical:* which illustrates a theme or a proposition derived from the design of the words, regardless of the phraseology, and to which an hundred texts would be equally applicable. The *Textual:* which deduces the divisions and materials from the language of the text. All these methods, except the first, Mr. Winter occasionally employed, but the last was his common one. And he excelled in it. How many passages of Scripture under his management, were rendered peculiarly instructive, beautiful, and interesting.

Sometimes, indeed, to a considerable degree, he was obscure and perplexing: there was an involution of plan, an intersection of parts, circuitous exemplifications, sentences too long, and parentheses too frequent. This was his greatest imperfection; and it rendered him frequently difficult of apprehension, especially among the common people. Indeed, in a general way, persons of some intellect and taste were the most likely to approve of his labours: for when most happy and successful in his addresses, there were beautiful transitions, allusions, and illustrations, too refined for ordinary perception and relish.

He had a rich acquaintance with the Scripture, and his sermons abounded with the words the Holy Ghost uses, admirably interwoven with his own.

The gravity of his appearance, and the excellency of his character, always prepossessed people in his favour, and disposed them to listen to him with attention; and they were amply repaid.—He very much excelled on public, and particular occasions; such as fast days; days of thanksgiving; the church festivals, which he commonly observed; the seasons of the year, which he never neglected; and deaths in his congregation and neighbourhood, which he always improved. In these performances peculiarly, though not exclusively, he discovered a considerable degree of originality, elegance, and ingenuity. But I fear there are young preachers who will affix wrong ideas to these terms; as it is certain, others have been already led astray by their mistakes concerning them. I avail myself therefore of the opportunity to deliver a few thoughts upon a subject not very well understood by all those who are emulous to excel.

There are some whose whole aim seems to terminate in their being *original* preachers. They must have something *new;* and in order to find it, will strike out into the unimportant and unprofitable. What is solid and useful is often rejected, because it is common and well known. But it should be remembered that usefulness is the end of preaching—that the most common truths are the most profitable—that our hearers are already too fond of speculations and fancies, that bear not on the heart and life—that we should endeavour to recall their attention to truths, which, though slighted, ought to be as interesting as they are momentous—that there is no new revelation to be expected; nor even any fresh doctrines to be discovered in the old one—and therefore—that with regard to us, originality of *subject* is, and ought to be out of the question; and that all the honour of this kind we can claim, consists in

new and pleasing combinations, arrangements, and exemplifications of old, simple and well known principles; the preaching of which, in the beginning of the gospel, converted the world from Paganism; at the reformation delivered the nations from Popery; and is now the power of God to salvation to every one that believeth. For want of considering that this is the only legitimate novelty and variety belonging to their public office, young ministers have often become unacceptable and useless. The body of the people would have been satisfied with useful and evangelical matter, however plainly delivered, but they were disappointed of their food, by efforts at peculiarity: a few individuals of more sense than piety, would have been pleased with a display of really superior intellect, but they were disappointed of their gratification, and withdrew disgusted by inadequate attempts to shine; and thus has the trifler fallen through between both parties.

It would be well to remember the remark which Johnson, in his life of Cowley, applies to the metaphysical authors, and which is still more true in reference to scriptural subjects, every one of which has been so frequently examined: "These writers who lie on the watch for novelty, could have little hope of greatness: for great things cannot have escaped former observation." It would be well also to recollect even in this borrowed sense, the adage of the apostle, "Every man in his own order." If we follow what is natural, though it may not render us popular, it will keep us from being ridiculous. It is better to effect well what is within our grasp, than to beckon people together to see us fall into a ditch, by reaching after fruit that requires longer arms.

Elegance is minute beauty, pleasing propriety. Simplicity is essential to it. Hence the line of Cowper, who was himself the finest instance of it—

"—— Elegant as is simplicity."

It is the same in style as what is called chasteness in painting, and which is the opposite to exuberance and glare. An indiscriminate and unsparing application of florid colours, may daub a sign post, but will not be admitted into the gallery. It is the same as gracefulness in apparel; and which is inconsistent not only with slovenliness, but with gaudery. A well-dressed gentleman is very distinguishable from an harlequin. See an elegant female enter a garden; from the profusion of the borders, she seeks an assortment of beauty; her eye guides her hand; she gathers, but not all that comes in her way; she selects, and the choice discovers her taste; she arranges, and the order equally displays it: the several parts aid each other by their hue, and by their position; though brought together, there is no crowding; though diverse, there is no confusion; though adjusted, no formality; they open, and wave, and retain a natural appearance, even in this artificial state.—But another runs on, gathers, because they are flowers, thinks she can never have enough, and leaves off, because the hand can squeeze no more—she binds it—it is a bundle of flowers—but the former is a nosegay.

A love of genuine simplicity is, perhaps, the best proof of an approximation to mental maturity. But there is an infantile state, during which gaudiness and glitter, shining metaphors, and poetical prose are preferred to it.

Nearly the same may be said with regard to what is *ingenious*. That which distinguishes the true from the spurious is this, the effect appears natural as soon as it is produced, though it was not obvious before; and the reader or hearer wonders that he had not been able to achieve himself, what now seems so plain. Thus Milton, in referring to the consequence of Satan's advice in the council:

"The invention all admired, and each how he
To be the inventor, miss'd, so easy it seemed
Once found, which yet unfound, most would have thought
Impossible."

If this statement be just, there is much that would pass for the effect of genius that abides not the test. If the thoughts are surprising, they are not natural: and instead of being easy, they require labour to comprehend and retain them, as well as to produce them. They may indicate learning, and display knowledge, but they do not fascinate, so that a man cannot disengage his mind from the charm! they do not dissolve him, so that all his feelings are melted into a sympathy of delight with the subject! And here again it is no unusual thing for young preachers to err. They value things according to the labour they cost them, and expect others to do the same; and after straining and polishing, wonder at the little interest they have been able to excite; while others by a touch will electrify. The mind is in the best state for composition when it is full of feeling, but at ease, insensible of great expectations from it, and unapprehensive of difficulty. A man may run himself out of breath with his eyes in the air; the flowers are at his feet.

In the discharge of his office as a minister, nothing was overlooked,

"But in his duty prompt at ev'ry call,
He watch'd and wept, he pray'd and felt for all.
And, as a bird each fond endearment tries,
To tempt its new fledg'd offspring to the skies;
He tried each art, reprov'd each dull delay,
Allur'd to brighter worlds, and led the way.

"Beside the bed where parting life was laid,
And sorrow, guilt, and pain, by turns dismay'd,
The reverend champion stood. At his control,
Despair and anguish fled the struggling soul,
Comfort came down the trembling wretch to raise,
And his last falt'ring accents whisper'd praise."

With regard to this part of his work in which he peculiarly excelled, though he imagined himself very defective in the manner of the performance; he has expressed himself in a letter to the Rev. Mr. S——r, of B——s: and the hints may be serviceable to others.

"You wish to possess my idea on visiting the sick. What I have to say upon this subject is in brief. I find it to be one of the most difficult parts of my ministry. To speak to a careless sinner as though his state were favourable, is not possible. To use those liberties which some good men do, I cannot, by attempting to torture the mind, by imposing duties which though they may be expected from convalescence, cannot from persons whose minds have been so injured by their disorder, that they cannot preserve a chain of thought, nor exert themselves in the diligent pursuit of knowledge necessary to be acquired. I can seldom do more than remind them that it is a melancholy consideration, if they put off the concerns of the soul till they are fit for nothing; urge them to examine themselves diligently, reminding them that while they are strangers to the evil of sin, they cannot put a true estimate upon Jesus Christ: that there is no salvation for any but in him; that if under a consciousness of their guilt, they earnestly apply to him, from his merciful and gracious disposition there is hope concerning them.—Indeed the peculiar circumstances of the patient guide to proper language, and it is pleasure rather than pain, to attend those whose state is promissory, whose sickness is sanctified, and who are reaping the benefits of a work of grace previously begun upon them. I generally turn from the sick to those who are healthy in the room, and conceive that by serious addresses to them, I may speak what is necessary to the sick. I generally endeavour to be very serious in prayer, and usually, if the case of the patient will bear it, read, and as it is your practice, make use of the Scriptures in my address."

Mr. Winter was singularly pre-eminent in the devotional part of his ministerial work. I have heard many pray, but I never heard one that prayed like him. I never knew him at a loss for a word, or using a word improperly. Such was the copiousness, such the flexibility of his talent, that without any premeditation, he could perfectly accommodate his language to every occurrence. He introduced little things with dignity, and delicate ones without offence. This gave him a great advantage, as he was enabled at all times to notice very affectionately the various and minute circumstances of his people. Were some to attempt this, who possess not his richness and ease of diction, it would only embarrass them, and render them formal and absurd.

I am persuaded however, that much of his devotional fluency arose from the state of his heart; for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. The purity and fervour of his benevolence made his tongue as the pen of a ready writer. We can easily plead for those we love, and he loved all he beheld. In one of his letters he beautifully remarks, in allusion to the words of our Saviour, "That when he looked down upon the congregation, he saw every where his brother, his sister, his mother."—No wonder such a man could pray or—preach. The Sabbath morning he was more than ordinarily devotional, and commonly indulged himself at length, especially at intercession: at other times he was rather short.

To conclude this article,

> "I would express him simple, grave, sincere;
> In doctrine uncorrupt; in language plain,
> And plain in manner: decent, solemn, chaste,
> And natural in gesture; much impress'd
> Himself, as conscious of his awful charge,
> And anxious mainly that the flock he feeds
> May feel it too; affectionate in look,
> And tender in address, as well became
> A messenger of grace to guilty men.
> Behold the picture!"

It is hardly necessary to make another separate article, by considering Mr. Winter, fourthly, as an Author.

He published no work of any extent, and what he furnished the public, does not rise above mediocrity. It consisted principally of sermons, all of which were funeral.

The first of these was on the death of Mr. Joseph Shipman, one of the students formerly expelled from Edmund-hall, Oxford, and whose case excited so much attention. This was preached at Upton upon Severn; and is dedicated to sir Charles Middleton, now lord Barham.

The second was on the anniversary of the death of Mr. Whitefield. This was preached at Gloucester, and is dedicated to the poor belonging to the Tabernacles at London and Bristol. As this dedication is very characteristical of the man, I cannot forbear inserting a part of it.

"My dear friends,—The following sermon does not make its appearance in the world for any imagined excellency I conceive there is in it; my only design is to answer the title, and by an honourable, though short mention of one of the best friends I ever had, to testify to the church and to the world, the obligations I am bound in gratitude to think myself under to Mr. Whitefield; and I must take the same occasion to intimate, that throughout the connexion I had the honour of, with that great man, I did not seek to serve myself more than to be serviceable. When I first thought of making this discourse public, I intended to dedicate it to a person of distinction, whom I count worthy of double honour, till I was struck with the observa-

tion of the wise man, viz. 'The rich have many friends;' and as dedications intend nothing more than tokens of our respect, to whom should I show them more readily, upon such an occasion, than to those who have the preference of the best of blessings, I mean the gospel, whereby to be made rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom the Lord hath promised! Yours then, my dear brethren, is this sermon, whose servant he was, for Christ's sake, whose memory occasioned it.

"For some time I was a labourer among you; many of you knew my original, and, boasting excluded, it is a satisfaction to me, that I can review what manner of entering in I had unto you, and the whole of my behaviour while among you; that touching my moral conduct, herein I exercised myself always to have a conscience void of offence.—When I reflect upon my past labours, they are a sufficient cause of humiliation, and yet I am a wonder to myself, when I consider how destitute of every necessary acquirement I at first made my appearance, and what incessant interruptions I met with.

"A growing acquaintance with myself made me conscious of my inability to be so beneficial to you as I desired, therefore, entirely at my own repeated request, Mr. Whitefield took me into America, where I thought I might be useful in a sphere that nobody would envy me; and where, free from all the trials attending a more popular life, I might glorify God, and be serviceable to the most oppressed and afflicted part of my fellow-creatures. During my state of trial in this humble situation, my habitation was a Beth-el, my soul was possessed with the peace that passeth all understanding; my black charge was dear to me, and I much desired the time when I should be in a capacity to serve them according to my utmost wishes, and for ever retreat from a world of vanity. This happiness I am obliged to say, the b——p of L——n most unkindly and most ungenerously deprived me of, though I sought it at the hazard of my life. And no sooner did I meet with his unkind treatment, than by an instance from another quarter, which I desire to bury in eternal silence, I was taught to cease from man, whose breath is in his nostrils.

"You, my brethren, at Bristol, know how pressingly, and at what a critical juncture I was brought into your service, in which I still consider myself engaged, though less frequent than formerly; owing to the observance of a piece of wholesome advice dear Mr. Whitefield often gave me, viz. 'Be servant like, but not servile.' And blessed be the Lord, I find there are doors enough open to me, quite beyond my expectation; my feet have been set in a large place; the poor are the subjects of my itinerant ministry, and I can say, as the result of my strongest affection for them, I am willing to spend and be spent for them, not doubting, but when I can do no more, the Lord will take care of my feeble remains.

"Perhaps the persons into whose hands these papers may fall, require a word of consolation as well as instruction. You are poor, and your situation exposes you to many and great trials; it may be, you find them a sore burden, apparently too heavy for you to bear. Be it so, you have these considerations to comfort yourselves with: first, they are ordered by the Lord. He is privy to, and designs some salutary end by them. We are poor disordered creatures; he is the physician, and knoweth that we have need of all these things. The medicine may operate severely, but the several ingredients in it will work together for good; and however they may put you to pain for the present, they will be matter of praise hereafter. God Almighty doth not afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men; there is necessity for all that he doeth, and the necessity is on our part; when he shall be visibly glorified by the several dispensations of his providence, your profiting will appear unto all men.

"Secondly, The Lord is daily answering your prayers wherein you request that his will may be done. It is enough that he hath promised he will fulfil the desires of the righteous: but how, or by what means he will perform his promise, is not for you to know; all you have to do, is to follow the prescriptions given you, and suffer the will of God concerning you. Ye have heard of the patience of Job, amidst a variety of the most complicated distresses, and have seen in the history of his life, the end of the Lord, that he is very pitiful, and of tender mercy. You must acknowledge that your blessings are more than a counterbalance to your distresses; and as you are assured, that an eternal weight of glory is to be the interest of your light afflictions, be steadfast, and hope to the end. Divine supports shall be given unto you, and if the period of your suffering season should be drawn out to an unusual length, the grace of God shall be sufficient for you, and as your day is, so shall your strength be.

"Thirdly, In the word of the Lord is both hope and comfort, and this is the word that is preached unto you. I should be sorry to make your temporal circumstances the alone objects of my attention, and I hope you have greater ends to answer, by hearing the gospel, than to alleviate the sorrow of the world. It so happens, that a tide of spiritual distress frequently flows in upon the children of God with their temporal calamities, therefore a suitable remedy for both is deposited in the sacred word; and as wise stewards of the mysteries of God, ministers are to deal them out as the exigencies of the people require. If it is well with your souls, in other respects,

all is and will be well. As Jesus is the fountain of life, and always accessible and communicative, I beseech you to come to him just as you are, poor and needy and bowed down. Cast all your burdens upon him; you may derive a supply for all your wants out of his fulness, he will withhold from you no manner of thing that is good; it is your privilege to trust in him at all times, and your peculiar mercy, that he will never leave you nor forsake you.

"Thus much I thought necessary to say to you, my poor dear brethren, in this dedication, to supply what may appear defective in the sermon; and now I beg an interest in your prayers, that God may give me a pilgrim's heart with a pilgrim's life, that I may aim to promote no interest besides that of the kingdom of God, nor attempt to appear an advocate for any other party besides that which shall stand upon Mount Sion. There it will be seen how sincerely I have been, and so far as occasion offers, am yet yours affectionately, &c.

"*Bristol, October* 5, 1773."

The third was on the death of Mrs. Lanfear, the pious sister of Mrs. Winter.

The fourth was on the death of Mr. John Fryer, of Frampton upon Severn.

The fifth was on the death of Mr. Zacharias Harlock, of Painswick, aged ninety-two.

He published a charge, delivered at the ordination of the Editor; and another at the ordination of Mr. Golding, who was also one of his students.

Some valuable reflections are annexed to the life of Mrs. Joanna Turner, without his name. Some may not be aware of this, but he was "The worthy Dissenting minister" who is there said to have furnished them.

He sent various communications, especially obituary and biography, to the magazines, which I cannot specify. The lives of Mr. Hogg and of Mr. Adams were written by him.

He was idly appointed final Editor of the Theological Magazine, but others engrossed all the influence, and no papers were ever sent him. He wrote the preface to that work, which some one contrived to spoil before it was printed.

Mr. Winter frequently mentioned a design to publish some memoirs of that very extraordinary character, Salmanazer, but the intention was never executed. This is the more to be lamented, as he was peculiarly intimate with him, and attended him in his dying moments. Mr. Winter had hope in his death. He had a fine original portrait of him as large as life. But we hasten to observe him finally—

As a Christian.

Of the carbuncle it is remarked, that it looks on fire, but when touched it is as cold as other stones. There are persons who soon rectify our mistakes concerning them, by our intercourse with them. They will not endure close inspection. Their piety is official rather than personal. It consists in certain exercises and appearances, which are resigned with the occasions that require them: and in company they are the merry companions, the temporising associates; in the house, the cruel husbands, the negligent fathers, the tyrannical masters.

But it was otherwise with Mr. Winter. His private life was not only consistent with his public character, but surpassed it. We respect him as a man of letters and knowledge, we love him as a tutor, we revere him as a preacher; but as a Christian he "excelleth in glory."

And here I find it impossible to do any thing that is very satisfactory to my own mind, or that will probably meet the sanguine wishes of those who intimately knew him. The amiableness and holiness of his daily walk, were so invariable, that, as the whole cannot be produced, so reasons to determine the selection of particular parts are not easily found. Facts, like quotations, are not always specimens; they may rise above the general practice, or be peculiar to themselves; but here the various excellences we adduce are instances, and may be compared to small samples severed from a large piece of beautiful and finely woven cloth; they are of the very same texture and colour with the whole, and would have appeared to better advantage in their original connexion than in their detached form. For fifty years, here is a man unchangeable in all the varieties of life; by the grace of God, holding on his way without drawing back, or turning aside, or standing still, or even seeming to come short; what the Scripture calls a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God and escheweth evil.—Such an one we are called to "Mark and behold."

His mode of living was very simple and plain. There was nothing superb in his house, nothing superfluous or costly at his table; but a plenitude of wholesome fare, attended with such a graceful welcome, and such an agreeable intercourse, that whoever visited him was more than satisfied, though he might not find all the foolish and gouty indulgences, to which he had been generally accustomed. In a letter to his dear friend Mr. L—e, in acknowledgment of a favour received from him, he remarks, "My manner of life is happily adapted to the times; and, as my wants are contracted, I feel none of the inconveniences which crowd upon many, who suppose the ministerial office must necessarily be attended with style, and therefore confound the distinction between a man of property and a minister. A more public situation, for

which I acknowledge myself unfit, may require an appearance with which I can with propriety dispense, and am bound to acknowledge, I can obtain *all* I want for myself and my dear wife, with the interest of £100 which she brought me, and the £50 per annum which my situation produces. But I must be given to hospitality, and an attention to this duty *seems* to require a little augmentation, for which I have trusted Providence, and Providence has honoured the confidence reposed in it. The expense of a plain meal, beyond which I never exceed, differs from that of a feast. Wherever I have been, the poor have closely attached to me, and in fact have been part of my family. For their sake I am thankful for such a friend as my dear Mr. L—e, who blesses me with his friendship, and honours me with his pecuniary favours, and affords me the pleasure, by giving me an opportunity to impart it to others, which he himself feels in imparting to me."

His family worship was early both morning and evening. Reading the Scripture always made a part of it, and a portion of Henry's Exposition generally accompanied it. Singing also was commonly blended with it. He was remarkably fond of psalmody, and could sing well himself. But—the prayer!—Though the frequency of the exercise, and the sameness of the circumstances tend to formality, and allow of little diversity in domestic devotion; yet his addresses always seemed as new as they were appropriate, and as comprehensive and particular as they were short and free.* I shall never forget these exercises; they enlivened me, however dull, and impressed me, however insensible. I rose from my knees longing to be better; longing to be more like him; and thought of the exclamation of Philip Henry, when he closed the duty of the Sabbath, "Well, if this be not heaven, it must be the way to it." Many have expressed a wish that a collection of prayers was published, more peculiarly adapted to the use of families than any of those which have already appeared. Nothing would have supplied this want like a number of his ordinary devotions in the family, had they been secured in short hand.

Mr. Winter had no children—unless by adoption and kindness. Of this class, indeed, he had many. And it is worthy of remark, how singularly he attracted and attached all young people to him. And this was the case even with children, so that I believe no child was ever in his company but loved him: and when

"The service past, around the pious man,
With ready zeal, each honest rustic ran;
E'en children followed with endearing wile,
And pluck'd his gown to share the good man's smile.
His ready smile a parent's warmth express'd,
Their welfare pleas'd him, and their cares distress'd."

As a husband, he was a pattern of relative virtue. While writing this very paragraph, I have thrown my eye upon the copy of a letter to a friend on his marriage, in which he observes: "Much of the happiness of the conjugal state consists in reciprocal giving and receiving; bearing with infirmities common to men, and forbearing to avail ourselves of inadvertencies; closing the eye to failings, and opening it to a discernment of what is praiseworthy.—The study of mutual felicity will be well rewarded, and it is a duty we owe to ourselves, and to the partners of our lives.—The bond that is soon to be dissolved should be firm while it holds." To Mr. L—e, on his marriage, he writes, among other things, "May your wishes be succeeded to the uttermost, and your expectation of the felicity of the state of matrimony, be answered beyond conception. I could indulge myself in the multiplication of good wishes; they shall all be included in one—may every blessing unite to make you happy. They will, if you set the Lord always before you, choose him for your best portion, and study to advance his interest among men. Mr. Matthew Henry's dying testimony will always prove true. 'A life of communion with God is the happiest life in the world;' and his remark in the beginning of his Comment is as worthy of notice, that 'He who has a good God, a good wife, and a good home, needs nothing more.' It is the property of a good wife to make domestic happiness; and we seldom find men disposed to seek an addition to their happiness abroad, who, by the attentions of a bosom friend, are made happy at home. When we do meet with instances to the contrary, it is in those whose natural depravity is not subdued. But dear Mr. L—e has long since lived under the triumphs of grace; he has been walking in its paths, been guided by its instructions, and has adopted all that it inculcates. His choice therefore, I am persuaded, is favourable to his growth in grace; and whatever additional claims his new state may impose, he will be equal to, and live in the conscientious discharge of, till the end of life is answered, and he shall receive the 'Well done,' with which the Lord will welcome into his joy, those who acquit themselves properly in the duties enjoined upon them, and are found faithful in the improvement of the talents intrusted to them. Exertions in his service from principle, will prevent us from giving them an undue merit: we shall not rob him of the glory which is his due, because he condescends to accept our efforts, and, though infinitely short of perfection, yea, attended with numerous instances of imperfection, honours

* Mr. Winter was never tiresome in domestic devotion. He often mentioned that Mr. Whitefield being at a friend's house, the master of the family one evening prayed himself. He was immoderately long; in the middle of the prayer Mr. Whitefield rose up and sat down in the chair; and when the long-winded gentleman had done, said to him with a frown, "Sir, you prayed me into a good frame, and you prayed me out of it again."

them with his plaudit. By the grace and providence of God, we are what we are; and his grace will keep us from being proud and vain, while under the conduct of his Providence, we have opportunities afforded us to honour our religion, and to be an example to those around us."

It is to be remembered, that whatever Mr. Winter enforced, he also exemplified. He loved his wife even as himself. This affection was never interrupted by passion, or sullied by pettishness. Neither was it suffered to cool with years. It had no abatement under the infirmities and decay of its object. When he was at home, no proper attention was omitted: when abroad, no engagement hindered the regularity of his correspondence.—Nor was he satisfied but in proportion as he realized in his companion, an immortal too. All his intercourse was as religious as it was kind and tender. O! what opportunities have I had to perceive this in all his letters that have passed under my review!—In this manner, indeed, the union commenced: and I cannot resist the inclination I feel to introduce a little of his correspondence with Mrs. Winter before marriage. It will be found very descriptive of the man; it may prove exemplary. Here follows his first address.

"Madam,—I hope this letter will neither give you surprise, nor disgust—I write it in the fear of God, with a single eye to his glory, from the necessity I am under to alter my condition, and the high esteem I have conceived for you.—The lowliness of my circumstances, together with my want of a settled being, hitherto prevented my ever addressing any one; and I do not now wish to think of a young person, conscious to myself that I am not equal to the duty required in the charge of a large family.—The present line the Providence of God has cast me into, makes my circumstances equivalent to an annuity of about £35 per annum, and as I do not want to live better than strictly decent, I flatter myself I shall do no injury to the substance of the person I desire to be united with.—If I might have the privilege to address you, madam, I desire to do it on the most honourable terms—should I succeed, I have not the least doubt but I shall discover an affection worthy of the marriage state, and engage your affection toward myself by a uniform temper and deportment. I have not the least objection to my character and conduct being scrutinized into, with the utmost care and diligence, and if you please, I will refer you to persons whose eminence will give weight to their testimony.—A line from you will be esteemed a favour, and if it brings the least hint answerable to my wishes, you may expect a visit from me very soon; on the other hand, if you see it right to put a negative upon my request, I shall endeavour to consider it in a proper light, and be conscientiously careful, not to make any future interview with you troublesome. You would have heard nothing from me upon this subject, if I did not believe you to be united to, and a sincere follower of, the dear Lord Jesus. It will be by a mere mistake if ever I take a person of a contrary disposition into my embraces, and the more such a person differs in dress, in the choice of company and matter of conversation from the world, the better by far will she suit me. The brilliancy of heaven is truly admirable, and therefore desirable; the ornament Peter recommends, may be worn without remorse of conscience, even when it is truly awake to know, and serious to examine. That you, madam, may never put any thing on, but what you can easily put off, and cheerfully exchange for a grave suit; that you may never unite with any but in an indissoluble bond, is the sincere prayer of, yours, in the gospel, C. W.

"1778."

"Dear madam,—In the former letter you did me the honour to receive, I promised, in case you did not comply with my request, not to make any future interview troublesome. I hope you will not deem a renewal of the request a breach of promise. I do intend, with your permission, if an opportunity offers, on Thursday afternoon, to say something upon the subject; but I thought it necessary to give a previous hint of my intention, lest, being unapprized of it, I might hurt your delicacy.—All you have to say short of an absolute denial I shall be apt to raise my hopes upon. Your only objection hitherto, I am inclined to think, is a fear, that by contracting an intimacy with me, you should make a fracture in the union of your family—this I would willingly avoid. But is not their consent to be won? I conceive Mr. B———n is a man of understanding. Will you let me pay a compliment to his judgment, by asking his consent to address you! If so, you shall be heartily welcome to inspect the letter. I shall never think of forming a union with any other woman while I have the hope of succeeding with you. Let me beg you to be tender to this declaration, and come to a determination as soon as you can. Should any thing in Providence occur to retard the accomplishment of my wishes, I will endeavour to reconcile myself to it, if I have but your promise.—Do make it matter of prayer, and the will of God will be made manifest. To-morrow morning at eight o'clock, I shall be upon my knees to solicit (in a particular manner) the blessing of God upon my endeavours to gain you. What, if at the same time you should withdraw from the family for a few moments to ask counsel of him? It may hereafter furnish us with an agreeable conversation, when we take a retrospective view of the footsteps of

his Providence, and be the occasion of our mutual thanksgiving.—In hopes that this will be one (and the most material) of my latter day temporal blessings, I will venture to subscribe myself, dear madam, yours, &c.

"*Marlborough, Jan.* 5, 1779."

"My very dear, ever dear friend,—Perhaps you would smile to yourself if you did but know how the parson was tricked last night. Though his strength was as exhausted as usual with the duties of the day, in hopes of meeting with one he most sincerely loves, he gave an elastic spring, and with his mind formed for conversation, trotted away to Mr. Merryman's; but, to his great disappointment, the dear object of his affection was not there. This event preached a better sermon to him than he had preached to his congregation, though he had been three times engaged. It brought a conviction that covered him with shame. It made him reflect with humiliation, how stupid and inactive his powers are, when they ought to be vigorously exerted in pursuit of the dear Lord Jesus.—I hope he will take from you your present aversion to a situation in town, seeing it is his good pleasure to deny us the opportunity of an habitation out of town. I am persuaded a little time will make it familiar to us. It should become a matter of great indifference what our neighbours have to say or think concerning us, while we study to approve ourselves unto God. For my own part, I should be glad to have matters settled soon, and as the first necessary step, should be glad if you would come and see the house, and give me your thoughts about it. We must not expect the advantages of a Paradise while we are here; every gratification will have its alloy, every habitation its inconvenience, every friend his imperfection, and every change of situation something we shall be loth to part with, as well as something we shall be ready to come to. Think, my dear love, of this—not to distress yourself, but to be fortified with such precaution as will be a check upon disappointment, and a means to reconcile you to the little inconveniences which will always attend us in this life.—With this you will receive a small valuable pocket Bible, which I beg your acceptance of, in testimony of your intention to make a present of yourself to me. It has been long a part of my small property, and I rejoice that I have it to present to you as the best signature of my love, and in confirmation of my persuasion, that the rich and inexhaustible treasure it contains is all your own.—I have not one of the same impression by me: but the quarto one, neatly bound in black calf, is of *equal value*, nor would I part with it upon any consideration, but that of a desire to testify to your dear sister what an affectionate alliance I wish to form with her, through my union with you. I beg her acceptance of it with my love, and pray that its precious contents may be the joy, the desire, the guide, the support of her soul. It is the christianity of the Bible, that only will stand the test; and all the profession of religion that will not admit of a trial by it, will be reprobated by God, the righteous judge in that day, when every man's works shall be tried so as by fire. O that I may derive all my doctrine from it; and that we may mutually agree to square our lives and conversation by its unerring and safe rule! Pray for me, and believe me to be, yours, &c.

"*Marlborough, January* 11, 1779."

"My very dear, ever dear friend,—You must necessarily have been very much engaged and exercised by the death of your brother. It is an event that I hope will be much sanctified to you and yours. In consequence of it, I could not have said much to you upon our own concerns, if I had had opportunity; but opportunity has been cut off, and my mind has been strangely bewildered, and I may add, afflicted, by the repeated aversion you have expressed against living in the town. While Providence denies me the pleasure of frequent interview with you, it is impossible for me to act as I would, and unless you can conquer your little prejudice against a public neighbourhood, I do not see how my strong desire of union with you can be accomplished. You have too much good sense to require severe asseverations in confirmation of what does not admit of a doubt. I shall therefore be content to say, if I could raise you a house of gold, on a paradisaical spot of earth, it should be at your service; or, if Providence should abridge us of an habitation so convenient as we would wish to enjoy, I could be content to dwell with you in mud walls. I have been in perpetual thought ever since last Monday, about a house out of town, but in vain; and even though a spot could be procured to build upon, serious and deliberate reflection convinces me, that it would be the most imprudent step we could take, to attempt it. For instance, nothing could be raised but out of your own stock, and by a purchase made previous to the building itself. My continuance in Marlborough depends upon the affection and esteem of my friends, and the success of my ministry; either or both of these failing I must decamp, and then what good would a house do us, merely suited in size, substance, and situation to our own convenience? Mr. Hancock assured me it was not in his power to oblige us with a house by the meeting, and I am as far from approving of that in the church-yard as you would be, if it was only because the rent would be too high. This difficulty on our first setting out is very seasonable, at least to me. In a day or two after I left Rockley, I wrote largely to some of my London friends,

upon the amiable qualifications of the dear woman, whom I told them the Lord had secreted and preserved to be a help, a delight, a principal temporal blessing to me. Nor can I yet alter my sentiment, while I think of the antidote against the cold, she so kindly sent me on Monday evening last, and which, through the blessing of God, had its desired effect. Will my dear love let me drop her a hint upon a subject she must know by experience, if ever she is the wife of a minister of Christ, viz. *the cross*. It will appear in ten thousand forms, and be felt in almost every occurrence of life. It will cleave to us if we are Christians, and if we carry it as submissively becomes the disciples of Jesus, it will befriend us even while it galls the shoulder, and prevent our loving, or being loved by the world to our utter destruction. Consider a necessity to live in Marlborough against your natural inclination, one instance of your obligation to take up the cross among many. And if it should be the chief instance, it is more the name than the thing. In general, God does not suffer his people to pass from earth to heaven, with so trivial and little interruption. Where the thing is little, it ought to be the more readily complied with, otherwise we shall appear to great disadvantage when tried by that rule, Luke xvi. 10. Had I studied my own ease and convenience, I should have taken a very different course to that I have pursued through life hitherto; but I enjoy a secret satisfaction in imitating his example in any degree, who pleased not himself, and have reason to blush before God, that having such an example of self-denial in the dear Redeemer, I have in so great a measure walked contrary to it. Heaven will make amends for all; they who have most of the afflictions of this present life, will have most of the glory of that blessed state. Nor shall we wait till our coronation day, for consolation. It will mingle with our sufferings, and be the ingredient in our cup, that will taste stronger than our sufferings. This we may gather from 2 Corinthians i. 5. and iv. 17. Better example of patience under affliction, or of authority from whence to conclude the advantage of affliction, we cannot have. Therefore, my dear love, make yourself familiar with that subject in your meditation, that is most likely to be your companion in life. You may rest assured that I shall never intentionally add a grain to the weight. I mean all I say and abundantly more, and am persuaded, when you have conquered the difficulties of your first settings out, which (I know arise from the modesty of your temper) you will find as little inconveniences in a town, as in the country. All will depend upon the liberty you at first give your acquaintance. Give up yourself seriously to the Lord, and he will influence you with his wisdom to take every step right. I convey this by your old and trusty servant, Robert Deer, by whom I beg to know when I may have a sight of you. Should it be at Mr. Merryman's, I shall converse with you with some appearance of reserve, but do not let that hurt you; I shall have no reserve in my feeling heart. It pants for the hour when we shall be no more twain. I am, yours, &c.

"*Marlborough, Jan.* 18, 1779."

In another, after speaking particularly of a house and its advantages, he adds, "O how much of our time and thoughts are taken up about this life! We had need seize the earliest moment to animate each other with the thought of the life that is to come. Make it your daily concern to remember, that for a covert in time to be screened from temptation, and a habitation in glory we shall dwell in for ever, we must be debtors to Jesus; and miserable wretches must we be, if he does not espouse our cause, and take the management of our best concerns into his own hands. Wo be to the man whose attention is swallowed up about a being for his body, and exposes his immortal soul to wrath and destruction. I trust this will not be our case. In confidence that I am not mistaken, I long for the commencement of the time when we shall aid each other in praising the rock upon which we are built, the Saviour by whom we are redeemed.

In the last, previous to marriage—"I am sure you will see the hand of God in placing us in this dwelling. My heart is affected with it, and my expectation of our being mutually happy together, rises higher and higher. I know you will not delay to come, longer than is necessary, and for so great a blessing as I expect to enjoy in you, I am willing to tarry the Lord's leisure. I am but poorly with a cold, but my soul is happy in God, and while I am thinking of the prospect of a nuptial enjoyment with my very dear elect, I am at the same time thinking of the period of my departure. But alas! earth preponderates the scale of heaven. The Lord make me more spiritually minded."

We need not wonder that a connexion thus formed should have yielded so much peace and pleasure.

Equally excellent was he in the relation of a *master*. He was one of the good and gentle, he forebore threatening: and was therefore served from affection rather than duty. He considered servants as humble friends. He marked their peculiar cases in his devotion, as well as those of the higher branches of the household: he always mentioned them in his letters. He frequently observed, that it was wrong to suffer a domestic to leave our family unable to read and write. How often have I seen this matchless character, infirm and enervated to a great degree, after toiling

all the day with his scholars and students, patiently, cheerfully, devoting half an hour in the evening to the instruction of his maid servant! These are scenes indeed that excite little notice and admiration *now;* but a day is coming, when it will appear that to be *truly* great is to be "Great in the sight of the Lord." "Therefore" said one of those who had seen him gird himself with a towel, and pour water into a basin to wash their feet, and who had themselves imbibed the spirit of the example—"Therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not."

No person was ever more formed for *friendship* than he, or entered more fully into all its duties. He "showed himself friendly," and he "had friends." The circle was very extensive and varied. He loved their company; he was devotedly regular and affectionate in his correspondence with them; he was grateful for their attentions and kindnesses; he entered into all their circumstances and feelings; by the tenderest sympathy he made their trials his own; and was sure to know their souls in adversity. His friendship was the most pious, the most durable, the most disinterested. Nothing was too costly for him to sacrifice, nothing was too arduous for him to undertake, nothing was too humiliating for him to undergo, if a friend was to be served. "He pleased not himself."—He never thought of his own advantage or convenience. He breathed for others. Hence what he says in a private letter, he might have published to the world without any danger of contradiction.—"I am happy that God has given me not only contentment with such things as I have, but also an accommodating turn of mind, so that I am desirous to make all about me happy, and am happy in their happiness." Indeed he was the Apostle's representation of love alive. "Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things."

This leads me to remark, that nothing characterised Mr. Winter more than *Beneficence.* His life was an entire conformity to the example of our Lord, who went about doing good. This was his study, his business, and his delight. His bounty was not pressed out of him by violence, like sourness from a crab; it dropped like the honey comb. It was not an occasional effusion like a summer-shower, but a perennial spring, the streams of which made glad the sons and daughters of affliction, all around him. And no being, since the days of Job, according to his sphere and his capacity, could, with more truth, adopt the exquisitely tender language: "When the ear heard me, then it blessed me; and when the eye saw me, it gave witness to me: because I delivered the poor that cried, and the fatherless, and him that had none to help him. The blessing of him that was ready to perish came upon me: and I caused the widow's heart to sing for joy. I was eyes to the blind, and feet was I to the lame. I was a father to the poor: and the cause which I knew not, I searched out."

Benevolence is to be judged of by proportion, by income, by self-denial. Hence the most liberal are often those who give the least. Our Saviour himself declared that the poor widow had given more than all the rich. They cast in *much*, she only *two mites;* but they gave of their abundance, and she of her penury; they could go home after all their bounty to a table spread with profusion and dainties, but she cast in all that she had for the day, even all her present living. A period is approaching that will develope character, and weigh motives; and then shall every man have praise of God. The hero shall be applauded who went boldly to the stake, as far as he was actuated by a concern for the divine glory: but that female sufferer in yonder obscure dwelling, month after month, year after year, devoured by the cancer, consuming the ear, the eye, the forehead, till it penetrated the brain; cheerfully enduring the anguish, without one murmuring word; retaining her confidence in God, and loving him under all the severity of his hand; talking of his goodness all the day long, and lamenting her own ingratitude; longing to be gone, yet willing to be detained.*—She will be the martyr! The trial of the one was short, but that of the other protracted; in his case there was every thing to rouse courage, in her condition every thing to repress it; he was attended by a multitude of spectators, she was unobserved—here all was pure principle, unaided by any extrinsical influence. So it is here. We are far from wishing to detract from the generous exertions of any; at the same time we must not separate principle from practice. It may be charitable to give what we do not want, and cannot use: but surely this is not the criterion of charity; it is not the charity of him, who, though he was rich, yet for our sakes came poor, that we through his poverty might be rich. Mr. Winter's resources were comparatively very limited and uncertain; by a little common reasoning, especially by the help of that Catholic argument, "charity begins at home," he might have justified the application of the whole of his income to himself; but his case was to separate every thing superfluous from what was really needful; and gratifications in books, conveniences in situation, accommoda-

* This representation is drawn from the life, and was exemplified in a good woman, whom the Author buried the morning he wrote this—it was from Mrs. Bailey.

tions in traveling, and indulgences with regard to a thousand nameless things, he refused himself, in order to possess some ability to be serviceable to others. And, his circumstances considered, no one can imagine how much good he accomplished.

We read of the alms *deeds* which Dorcas *did*, and one is specified—*her making* garments for the poor. Some who abound in wealth will perhaps consent to devote the time, and to take the trouble that is requisite to put their hand into their pocket, and even to bring it out again—but Mr. Winter was a benefactor. He was seen visiting the fatherless and the widows in their affliction; he was seen in the chamber of sickness, and by the bed of languishing; he was seen wherever disappointments and losses had left nothing but the attraction of misery: he and the selfish herd were sure to meet very near the door; they leaving their friends when they found nothing more was to be enjoyed; and he hastening thither as soon as he found something was necessary to be done—the image of him who has said "I will be with thee in trouble." Is it too minute to mention that his students knew what it was on a Christmas-eve, as soon as it was dark, to accompany him with large baskets of meat to leave in the houses of the poor; and then return for more, and take another route; and thus gratuitously furnish those with a comfortable meal, who, notwithstanding all Paley's "Reasons for Contentment, addressed to the Poor," could never purchase one for themselves. It would be endless to particularize instances of a similar kind.

He devised liberal things. If ever a scene of misery occurred within his reach, it instantly set his thoughts, his feet, his tongue, his pen in motion. When we can do very little personally, we may often do much by means of others. He was always stimulating his connexions. In private companies, and at public meetings, he had commonly some case of affliction to propose. Numberless were the letters he wrote, though he was so driven for time, and pressed by business, containing applications in behalf of orphanism, widowhood, or age. The distresses which rendered such petitions necessary, were patiently stated at large, and feelingly recommended, while by additional reflections, he endeavoured to render his address a letter of friendship as well as of charity.—And no one could refuse him. It would be curious to conjecture how much money he obtained in the course of his life by such importunity.

His disposition being known, and his character established, he was honoured by several, who statedly made him their almoner. Were the names of these generous individuals published, the late Mr. John Thornton, and the present Mr. Henry Thornton, would stand peculiarly distinguished. In the distribution of such money he acted with the greatest impartiality, prudence, promptitude, and fidelity, and fully met the wishes of the donors. "That day will declare" how far he was by such indulgences, from diminishing personal liberality, or applying to his own use what was intended for others. He refused the liberty to divide it with them, even when he was allowed to take it. Hence in a letter to Mr. L—e, in 1801, he says, "I was truly concerned to hear of dear Mr. Henshaw's removal. Blessed be God, he lived to purpose. Oh that his mantle, or what is the same, his spirit may drop on his relatives, who inherit his temporal blessings. I long wished to inform you that he kindly honoured my application of the 24th of November, on the 17th of January, with £15, and liberty to appropriate any part of it to myself. But no—I petitioned on the behalf of the poor, whose indigence is extreme, and the whole sum shall be faithfully applied to them."

It is well known that if any thing uncommon or delicate was sent to him in the way of a present, little, if any of it fell to his share; he would divide it among his friends, and these were often "The poor and the maimed, the halt and the blind." Ah! "They could not recompense thee; but thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just."

He was given to hospitality, and used it without grudging. His house was always open; and a welcome to enter or remain, was too easily discerned not to be abused. There were those who took advantage of his kindness to sponge upon him, and incommode him; and even some who had it in their power to remunerate him, the expenses and inconveniences they occasioned.

It was his fate to meet with peculiar ingratitude in many instances from those he befriended: yet this neither checked nor chilled him in his benevolent exertions. It only afforded an opportunity to illustrate the purity of his motives, and to show that he did good for the sake of doing it. I never heard him mention one of these instances, even in the way of complaint: and when others have been indignant at them, he has without exception, tried to apologize for them. The following fact may serve to explain and verify my meaning:—While I was under his care at Marlborough, among other beneficiaries was an aged female, whom he almost entirely supported for a good while before her death. So far from being duly sensible of her obligations to him, she betrayed much infirmity in several very opposite tempers, so as to induce many to speak very severely of her. When she was buried, he preached her funeral sermon from the words of our Lord, "Judge not, that ye be not judged. For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged; and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured

to you again; and why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye!!!"

Nor was he free from enemies. It might have been supposed that such a character could never have provoked any kind of hostility. But how then would he have been conformed to his Lord and Saviour who was all excellency, all amiableness; or how would he have escaped the denunciation, "Wo unto you, when all men shall speak well of you." Things like these, without justifying the agents, are permitted and overruled for good. They try, and they discover, distinguishing excellency. They are like the field of battle to the hero. "He that is slow to anger is greater than the mighty, and he that ruleth his own spirit, than he that taketh a city." "Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good." "It is the glory of a man to pass by a transgression." Laden with this as well as every other kind of honour, he descended to the grave. A man who for years had treated him very unkindly, and given him much trouble and uneasiness, stood in need of his assistance in a particular case some months before his death. He went and applied to him without any acknowledgments of repentance. Mr. Winter overlooked his injurious treatment, and without dropping a reflection, or discovering one emotion of resentment, politely received him, and attended to his request. The consequence was natural. I saw him at the interment among the mourning crowd weeping bitterly. Another person who was under great obligations to him, and whose family he had served in various ways, conceived a prejudice against him, and persecuted him with remorseless malignity. The deceased, after doing every thing that gentleness could devise to soften him in vain, mentions him in his will, and "Bequeaths to him his dying forgiveness."

His will indeed was all like himself. It is full of regard to the temporal and spiritual welfare of others. Nearly all his substance is appropriated to civil and sacred benefaction.

Innocency was a most prominent trait in the character of the deceased. Hence it was one day wisely and significantly said, by his esteemed friend, Mr. Matthew Wilks, "I am never with this man without being reminded of Paradisaical innocence." The reflection was as full of truth, as it was of taste: numbers when they read it will remember, and weep. Hence too, his dear and honoured friend, Mr. Hill, with his usual force and humour, said, "Mr. Winter would make the worst devil of any man in the world." It is awful to think how many beings there are, human in name and shape, but infernal in disposition and action; and who require only a little change of place to make them completely diabolical. But what a transformation must Cornelius Winter have undergone, before he could have borne the most distant resemblance to one of these unhappy spirits! So full of the meekness and gentleness of the Prince of Peace was he, that a friend, very remote from adulation, and of very discriminating judgment, in this city, more than once said, after he had been the subject of conversation, "I have long thought he is more like Jesus Christ, than any man on earth." I hope I shall be excused for these insertions; the gratification they afford while writing them, is beyond expression. And much of the pleasure arises not only from my regard to a character, the like of which I despair to see again, but from a conviction that the praises here bestowed upon him, do not savour of the falsehood, or lavishness of common eulogy.

I wish also this part of his character to be rendered exemplary. Innocency may be deemed a kind of negative quality, but it is an enjoined one, "Be harmless and holy;" "Give none offence, neither to the Jews nor to the Gentiles, nor to the church of God." David was so alive to this, that he was checked from repining and murmuring by the thought of it: "If I say I will speak thus; behold I should offend against the generation of thy children." It is surely an evidence of the degeneracy of the age, that an inoffensive man is an expression used generally to insinuate some imagined intellectual deficiency; as if there could be no good sense without cunning and villany. But as one has justly observed, "The craftiest villain is the greatest fool, and the harmless Christian the wisest man." It is true, inoffensiveness and talent do not always go together, but neither do wickedness and wit: and a man of inferior endowments, with an honest and good heart, is a far more valuable character, than one of greater capacities, who, while he has the wisdom of the serpent, has the poison too. Call this quality if you please, even an infantile property, provided you remember a piece of history: "At the same time came the disciples unto Jesus, saying, Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven? And Jesus called a little child unto him, and set him in the midst of them, and said, Verily I say unto you, except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven." So much more valuable in his followers, and in his judgment, are the simplicity and innocency of a child, than the coruscations of intellect, the speculations of philosophy, the intrigues of politicians, and the exploits of heroes.

But it must be confessed, that this inoffensiveness is peculiarly attractive, where it is combined with qualities that would render a man dangerous without it: where the sublime

is softened by the beautiful; where the simplicity of the babe tempers the wisdom of the sage. "In malice be ye children, but in understanding be ye full grown men: I would have you wise unto that which is good and simple concerning evil." And who did not perceive this in Cornelius Winter! How fearful was he of injuring the honour of religion, and causing the way of truth to be evil spoken of! How tender was he of the purity of another's mind, and the peace of another's conscience! With what truth could he have adopted the language of the apostle, "Wherefore, if meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth, lest I make my brother to offend." He made straight paths for his feet, for the sake of those that were walking after him, lest that which was lame should be turned out of the way. His concern was to heal, not to stumble. If a brother was overtaken in a fault, he restored such an one in the spirit of meekness, considering himself, lest he also should be tempted. No one was ever injured by his example, or his speech. He made no one angry, no one sad. His whole life was an exemplification of the admonition which Paul gave to his son Timothy, and which he often gave to *his* sons, "Speak evil of no man." And we know who hath said, "If a man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man, and able also to bridle the whole body."

As the thoughts we entertain of ourselves influence us in judging of others, the man who designs no evil often fears none; hence he is off his guard, and finds himself sometimes involved in difficulties which are escaped by those, who, from the reflection of their own sentiments, keep a sharp look-out upon others. This was not uncommonly the case with our departed friend. But I am persuaded, that notwithstanding these occasional disadvantages, he found his innocent and unsuspicious temper its own reward. "Who is he that will harm you, if ye be followers of that which is good!" Sufferings that befall us in this way will assuredly be overruled for our benefit. Yea, our own feelings will more than indemnify us for our losses. Nothing is so much to be deprecated as an habitual wretched state of suspicion and dread; having no confidence in those with whom we have to do; if we sit still—to be listening for the intrusion of thieves, or if we walk out—to be thinking of nothing but treading upon toads and serpents.

The *candour* of Mr. Winter was remarkable. His natural temper was unusually sweet, and religion improved it. He held his sentiments with firmness; but distinguished not only between the true and the false, but between the true and the important. He did not consider every thing alike momentous: and therefore he did not press it with the same degree of zeal. I never remember while I was under his care, any attempt to form my mind on inferior questions and disputes: he endeavoured to give it in all these cases a proper temper, but not a particular bias. "Recollect," said he, "that it is possible to defend your own fort without storming another's battery. Maintain by scriptural argument, your own principles and practices with modest confidence; but rail not, insinuate no reflection on your opponents; name them not unless—with respect."

Though he was a Dissenter from conviction before he had established his seminary, he sent one student to Oxford, and another to Cambridge. He admired the Liturgy; and was attached to instrumental music in the service of God.

Though he was a Pædobaptist, he was on terms of the most cordial friendship with Mr. Francis, of Horsley, and his brethren of the same persuasion, in Gloucestershire, and elsewhere. And here let me mention a circumstance not invidiously, but to designate the man. He was once desired by a Baptist minister to preach for him. The sermon immediately preceded the ordinance of the Lord's supper: to which his discourse was preparatory. When the public service was over, he was informed that he must excuse their asking him to communicate, as it was contrary to the law of the house. He very cheerfully withdrew into the gallery as a spectator: and all the remark he made in relating it was, "That he much enjoyed the service, and communed with them in spirit."

Here is a case which, arguing *a priori*, would appear incredibly strange, at least to some. Here are two parties of Christians, agreed in all their doctrinal, ecclesiastical, and disciplinarian principles—differing only in one point—and this not essential to salvation—even by the acknowledgments of both, however inconsistent with such an avowal, excessive zeal on either side may be: and yet these opponents, who, when they mutually explain can hardly find ground enough to stand upon, while they are disputing, have commonly betrayed such animosity, that a man of liberal disposition, who will not help forward the contention, is not supposed to have any fixed conviction upon the subject, and our admired poet has mentioned it, as the extreme influence of the power of charity, could it induce *them* to be friendly towards each other—

> "Relenting foes would lose their power, or cease,
> And e'en the dipp'd and sprinkled live in peace."

What Dr. Rippon said at the funeral of Mr. Ryland, many might have said at the death of Mr. Winter; "*We* talk of candour, *he* had it." Mrs. Shipway, of Bristol, was his very intimate friend, and many of Mr Winter's letters to her are now before me She had belonged to the Tabernacle; but in

1776, it appears that, from conviction, she was baptized by the late venerable Hugh Evans. A transition of this kind too often alienates the affections of those who complain of the loss they have sustained; and shyness, if not aversion, takes place of cordiality. But this was far from being the case with this man of God. His intercourse and correspondence were as frequent and affectionate as before. As some bigots may consider this a moral phenomenon, let us raise their wonder by introducing a part of two letters the deceased wrote to the individual above mentioned.

"My dear friend,—On Saturday I arrived here, after being absent more than fourteen months. In this time I have frequently thought of, and purposed to write to you, but something always prevented. It is not yet too late to testify my steady attachment to an old friend, who I did not know till I came here, had been buried in baptism. Well, I can have no just objection to that part of your conduct, though there is no apparent probability that I shall follow your steps. Through mercy I have learned to yield my prejudices to the wind, in matters of faith and practice, while I have reason to hope my differing brethren are following the dictates of a tender conscience under the influence of the Holy Ghost. It is, and ever has been, the lot of the poor Methodists to lose their children, but this is our comfort, we shall not lose the glory of their birth. I pray that you may derive much real advantage from your submission. The good Lord carry on his work upon your heart, and keep you a dependent on his dear Son. I do not doubt but he will: it is not his usual method to lead us into a deep knowledge of ourselves, and impart to us a growing acquaintance with Jesus, and then cast us off. Owing to the power of temptation, I find it hard to hang upon his breast, yet by the arm of his power defending and helping me, I have hold of him still, and trust I shall be able to maintain it. I am yet indulged with the liberty of speaking in his name, and that with some little success. Traveling without intermission is disagreeable to nature, but it has its reward, and a fear lest I should take a false step, disposes me to go forward. Perhaps I may get home sooner than I expect. Many of my dear friends are safely housed of late, it may be to escape a violent storm. What if it should overtake us in the wilderness!—Jesus is a refuge, and that is enough.—I wish you would particularly remember to give my dear love to Miss Delamain, Mrs. Brooks, and the mourner in Zion, under the same roof, and as many beside as know or inquire after me. Poor Bristol! I know thee, and I love thee, but have no more desire to see thee. Could I draw forth some of its select inhabitants, to this little spiritual Elysium, and you among the rest, I should be glad, and do not doubt but we should anticipate something of that land, where we shall meet to part no more. But we must submit to our Father's will, and bless him for the means he uses, to work that submission in us.—Pray for me, my dear friend, and rest assured that I continue, yours, affectionately, in our dear Lord Jesus,

"C. W.

"*Rodborough, April* 15, 1776."

"My dear friend,—I am obliged to you for your kind favour. I shall always be glad of a long letter from you, but must beg you to accept a short one from me. I have so many interruptions in my sphere, that I cannot go on with my necessary studies. I rejoice to hear that the Lord's work is going forward upon yourself and others. As to what you hint about a certain minister, I am unacquainted with it. To his own Master he stands or falls; whatever imprudent expressions may have dropped from his lips, I hope the Lord will pardon. I can observe too much zeal for a party both among Baptists and Pædobaptists, and am ready to conclude, the subject in debate is a partition-wall God never intended to separate between Christian and Christian, though he permits it. Good Mr. Bunyan's view of it, is too general and Catholic to satisfy the mind of a contracted bigot; if followed, it would cut off an opportunity for glorying in man. If nothing but what is consistent with sound argument and good manners is advanced from the Tabernacle pulpit upon the subject, I do not see why it should give more offence than what, in the same manner, comes from Broadmead. I highly esteem Messrs. Evans, believe them to be dear ministers of Christ, and think they have an undoubted right to assist my differing brethren in complying with the dictates of conscience, and pray, that through the divine power attending their ministry, your soul may be more dead to the world, more conformed to the image of Jesus, and more than ever alive to God. I do not wish ever to enter upon a controversy with you; my objections against a second baptism are at present insurmountable; my satisfaction with what I received in infancy is entirely satisfactory, nor have I the least uncharitable reflection to make upon you. I believe, in the world of spirits, the distinction will be lost, and therefore would avoid any prejudice from it now. Pray for me; you will not see me unless you come into the country; here I shall be glad to see you, and here you will see something of the Lord's glory as well as at Bristol.—My kind love to all dear inquiring friends.—There are many near you I love in truth, and hope nothing will interrupt our social enjoyment above. Wishing you every

blessing a covenant God can bestow. I remain, yours, &c.

"*Rodborough, August* 14, 1776."

Though he was a Calvinist he was intimately acquainted with Mr. Wesley, and often spent some days with Mr. Fletcher; and, in the earlier volumes of the Arminian Magazine may be found some specimens of their mutual correspondence. When, therefore, the Methodists two or three years before his death, erected a chapel in Painswick, though some of his people were displeased, viewing it rather in a way of opposition, he was far from complaining: and the Sabbath it was opened he largely and particularly prayed for the success of the gospel in it, in each of his public services.

In delivering his most important sentiments he always remembered the advice of the Apostle, "Speaking the truth in love." He did not suppose that religion was an altar that sanctified every gift. He knew that the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God. He therefore never employed a pen dipped in gall, nor a tongue set on fire of hell. He left those who differed from him the most widely, to their own Master; and treated them with the greatest affability and kindness. With some of them he was on terms of the most friendly intercourse, though they never entered the doors of his meeting, till a regard for his character compelled them to go to his grave to weep there.

The little liberality that prevailed among the professedly peculiar followers of Christ made him often sigh, and long for heaven. In a letter to lady H———, he remarks "All distinctions that now divide the people of God will then be lost. Though we are now distinguished by our peculiarities, we should not forget that we are but as so many tribes in the same Israel, and as so many families in the same tribes. When I regulate my views by these Scriptural considerations, it makes me very easy about who has the precedency, or what is the plan that seems to have most of the divine smiles. My utmost ambition is to walk in love, and so to improve my humble talent, that I may not be found with the wicked and unprofitable servant."

In another, to the same personage:—"It is not always necessary to take sides, and yet it is almost impossible often to be indifferent. When brought into such a dilemma, a tender mind feels perhaps more than the contending parties. This, among other things, serves to imbitter even the church as well as the world, and to make us desire to be absent from the body, and present with the Lord, where imperfections in knowledge will be no longer the occasion of differences in sentiment between the Arminian and Calvinist, the Churchman and Dissenter, the Baptist and Pædobaptist." In another letter to this lady—"I have always considered the church rather through the medium of Catholicism than as in party-detachments; and am persuaded that, if that generosity and real candour which make no inconsiderable part of our religion were mutually cultivated, our joint object would be, more to spread the gospel than to divide its professions into parties."

In a letter to a young friend who had expressed his scruples concerning the book of Canticles, he says—"Come and see me. We will talk over the matter, and if we cannot unite in sentiment, we will agree to differ; we will not quarrel about Solomon's Song, if you will agree to love a greater than Solomon."

No one will blame me for concluding this article with an additional testimony of the esteem in which his character was held by persons of different opinions; and by another instance of that graceful candour by which he deserved it.

"Respected friend, William Jay,—Observing in the Evangelical Magazine, thy intention announced to the public of editing Memoirs and Select Letters of my late highly valued friend, Cornelius Winter, I could not find my mind excused or satisfied to omit sending thee the inclosed; the return of which I request.—Accept every good wish for the success of the work, and that of thy ministerial gospel labours, which I have been occasionally favoured to enjoy through the medium of the press. I am, with every respectful regard, thy sincere friend,

"JOSEPH RICKMAN.

"*Cliffe Lewis.*"

"Dear sir,—The punctuality of the Friends is an example to Christians at large; I wish I could more exactly copy it, but *voluisse* only in this case, *non satis est.* The last time I was favoured with an interview with you, I promised to transmit to you the copy of Dr. Fothergill's letter to Mr. Whitefield, but it being mislaid, I could not perform my promise. It was some years before I found it; I have now an opportunity to send it; it is accompanied with my best and affectionate wishes, and would also with a greater number of lines if I were not circumscribed for time. An all-wise Providence has transferred me from the unfruitful soil of Marlborough, to the somewhat more fruitful soil of Painswick, where I am working in the vineyard according to the ability which God has given me, and waiting for my discharge from labour and dismission from life. Though I had really lost recollection of your name, I feel a warm attachment to your person, and am, in the love of him, who, in the dispensation of the fulness of time, will gather together in one all things in Christ.—Yours, &c.

"C. W.

"*Painswick, Aug.* 26, 1791."

"A few friends are in this town with whom I should be glad to accompany you to meeting, either to join in silent waiting upon God, or to receive instruction from your lips. It would no less give me pleasure to lodge you under our humble roof. Farewell."

"DEAR SIR,—Your favour which you indulged me with on the receipt of Dr. Fothergill's letter to Mr. Whitefield, is among my papers. It deserved an acknowledgment before now, but as I hinted to you, so it proves, I am a very bad and irregular correspondent. However, my friend coming into your town, I must make her the bearer of a line. I hope it will find you the same man in disposition and resolution; disposed as you long have been, to give the world to come the preference of this, and resolved, in the strength of divine grace, to obtain by vigorous exertion, in compliance with your Lord's will, and by firm reliance upon his promise, the prize of your high calling. O dear sir, what reason have we to be thankful that we have Scriptural ground to hope we are in the number of the chosen, and called, and faithful, and for that good hope through grace, which maketh not ashamed. Under different professional distinction we appear to the men of the world, as though we were going a different road, or as though there could be no central point in which we could meet; but we know to the contrary. Jesus Christ is the centre of unity, and by him, through one Spirit, we have access to the Father. The Lord, in tenderness to our weakness, can admit of our differences, and yet can give us a disposition to receive the same essential teaching, and will no doubt consider us in the number of the children of the church, concerning whom it is promised they shall all be taught of God. The happy consequent is, that we shall go unto Jesus Christ, and by renewed acts of faith renew our application daily unto him. It is his precious blood that cleanseth from all sin, and by renewed exertions of faith, we acquire its cleansing virtue. The agency of the Holy Spirit is exerted for our instruction and guidance into the way of all truth; and when we have made the necessary advancement, we shall be taken from the school of instruction to the mansion of our Heavenly Father, where our joy, which is here incomplete, shall be full. What wonder is it if with these views we should leave a noisy world to settle its own quarrels, and fight its own battles, waiting to see the events which the all-wise and overruling Providence will bring about by the contentions and dissentions of men. I allude now, as you may perceive, to the state of the political world, and to the several foreign events, which perhaps we could not have supposed, in our juvenile days, would have taken place. It is easy for Him who made the world, in an instant to unframe it, and reduce it to confusion, and to make it appear that the Most High ruleth in the kingdoms of men. We are the subjects of a kingdom that cannot be shaken, and if we have the grace answerable to our vocation, it is impossible that our minds should be diverted from it by important trifles. I cannot conclude these lines with any news. We are in a quiet and pleasant situation. Here are a few friends of your persuasion, something under twenty, among whom is a Mr. Roberts, formerly a merchant in the north of America. He is a person of great humanity and good understanding. He is a great botanist, and does good by the application of his study to physical cases. We are on good neighbourhood as you may suppose, and only a want of leisure prevents frequent society. Should any Providence call you into this neighbourhood, no one will be more happy to see you, than my dear sir, yours, affectionately, &c.

"*Painswick, March* 6, 1793."

His candour extended to matters of practice as well as of opinion: witness the following remark in a letter: "Though Mr. —— should continue angry with me, I cannot treat him as an enemy. We must bear our sufferings from the church as well as from the world, and stand the shock to which we are liable from the misunderstanding, and the resentment even of those we love. I bless God, the misapprehensions of my friends do not alienate my affections from them; and though I feel wounded, I can distinguish between the thrust of an assassin's poniard, and the blow of an offended brother who would not strike if he did not mistake."

His *improvement of time* was exemplary. Though always rather infirm and often poorly, how little did he indulge himself. Sloth was out of the question; but how much did he abridge what many would have deemed necessary for refreshment. He was a very early riser. How many exercises have I performed with him before six in the morning, sitting by his side at the table, or standing between his knees with his arm—I think I feel it now—upon my neck. When abroad, many an hour would he secure in his chamber retirement, before the families rose, for reading and writing. He was always anxious to return. His visits at home were short, but instructive. He never left a company without dropping something by which they might be the better for him. He thus exhorts one of his young friends,—"May you have wisdom to keep conversation in the visiting circle, from degenerating in the least degree. Connect piety with cheerfulness: let not the former be driven out by the latter. Keep not all your religion for the pulpit: have it at heart and at hand; at dinner and at tea; and let every occurrence furnish you

with a subject for spiritual improvement." This was his own practice. And though he did not speak much, and his extreme modesty kept him from taking the lead in conversation, he expressed himself with peculiar propriety, and dropped sentences which were not easily forgotten.

Though the Lord's way is hid from us, our way is not hid from him.

We have an unchanging world before us, and an unchangeable God with us.

I would not only be found in the Lord's work, but I would also do it in his way.

Let us rest in Jesus now, and we shall rest with him soon.

I want to be very different to what I am, much as I differ from what I was.

The more dangerous the way, the more cautious the traveller.

It is a great matter to be able to distinguish between waiting and loitering.

He is all to us, and does all for us, that he may have the glory of all from us.

Every place is alike to him, who goes no where without God.

Much may be done, as in the building of Solomon's temple, without the noise of axes and of hammers.

Seclusion from the world prepares us for communion with God; and communion with God prepares us for intercourse with the world.

I endeavour to take things as I find them. I fight with my own heart, from which I am most incommoded; and when I can get the victory there, I am an universal conqueror.

Though many of these kinds of aphorisms might have been secured from his lips, they dropped still more frequently from his pen: for the moments devoted to correspondence were by him deemed sacred and accountable; he said it was a fixed rule with him, "Never to write a letter without *aliquid Christi* in it;" and, neither in his conversation, nor his letters, were these reflections delivered quaintly, nor from a common place vocabulary, like those of some formal talkers and writers, who have a number of sentences prepared for the occasion, artificially introduced, and used till they are worn out. His remarks grew out of present circumstances, they were the spontaneous expressions of the moment, the natural effusions of a thoughtful mind, and a feeling heart, and were never repeated again. He had an inexhaustible affluence of sentiment and phrases. He was perpetually lamenting the waste of time by interruptions, and the loss of it by inability to improve it as he would. Referring to an engagement with a person of quality, he observes in one of his letters—"It gave me some little specimen of the attendance great people require, when they condescend to be friendly to a poor preacher; and I wish to know little *of* them, but with a design to do some little good *by* them. They make one spend more time to eat a dinner than seven of them are worth." In another he says—"Oh! that I had been more diligent in using the opportunities afforded me—the morning's work cannot be performed in the evening of the day. My gracious Master I hope will accept such feeble services as I am able to execute."

If ever a person was "Lowly in heart," he was the man: he was clothed with *humility*. In honour he preferred others to himself. He rejoiced to hear of their success, and was industrious to add to their fame. "He must increase, but I must decrease," was a sentiment that found in his mind its native soil. He condescended to men of low estate. A female friend of his lately put into my hand a letter, which he had written to her servant, whose mind was distressed: it was given me as a curiosity, but the thing was by no means remarkable in Mr. Winter. I have in my possession, by the death of the owner, perhaps fifty letters addressed to a day labourer, at Christian-malford; and, not to observe that something was conveyed in each of them for the poor man's relief, the letters are written with the same neatness and correctness, and are as large and sentimental, as any of those he addressed to persons of rank.

His humility was genuine, and not assumed. It was not the humility that is founded in vanity, and employs a number of self-annihilating expressions as anglers to fish for praise: a humility that retreats—to be followed; that refuses—to be courted; that disowns excellences—for the satisfaction of inducing others to affirm that we possess them, and believe that we are insensible of them. Reality needs no pretensions: but those who have neither the trouble nor expense of maintaining the reality, can afford to be very lavish in professions. I never once heard Mr. Winter in his public services deal in the language of many, who, while they call themselves "Dust and ashes," "Less than the least," "Unworthy to open their lips," show in their general carriage, that they have no very mean opinion of themselves; and whose frown would probably threaten the daring individual that would address them in the language of their own "voluntary humility." It is doubtless possible for persons to be led into the occasional use of such expressions from ignorance, simplicity, and a sense of what they really feel; but as they are commonly employed by that class of the ambitious who are straightened for expedients, and as they are generally considered the sneaking wishes of pride, it would be better to use them very sparingly, to keep our good from being evil spoken of, and to establish our claims to this christian excellency by something less cheap and suspicious—the whole course of our lives.

I remember soon after I was with him, I was called upon rather suddenly to preach at an association of ministers. My dear and honoured tutor saw my agitation as I was ascending the pulpit; and whispered to me on the stairs by which he was standing, "Make no apology." What he suspected, I had determined upon; but confiding in his judgment, I gave up my design. He afterward explained the reason of his prohibition; and added, that "A young preacher's manner out of the pulpit, and in the pulpit, will be his best apology."

If we consider his humility more immediately in reference to God, in whose sight the very heavens are not clean, and who chargeth the angels with folly—What wonder from such a man we meet with language like this. "I wish always to see myself what I am, and then no varnish can so alter me, as to make me excel in my own eyes."

"Lord, what am I? A sight of my own wickedness frequently bows me down, and I would if I could, lie ten thousand fathoms lower, so that I might but be within the reach of mercy.—It is never better with me than when I am necessitated to lie at the feet of Jesus, begging the crumbs of that bread, which, because I am not worthy to receive as a son, I would thankfully accept as a servant.

"The constraining love of Christ is the spur to my work, and the reward of my labour. And when the dear Jesus, who bought me with his blood, shall crown me with his glory, the whole hierarchy of heaven shall hear me shout grace, grace!"

To Mr. L—e. "We should do what we can, if we cannot do what we would; and when we have exerted ourselves to the uttermost, it becomes us to lie prostrate at the Redeemer's feet, acknowledging that we are unprofitable servants. I feel this to be the case. Whatever formality there may be in my duties, and much there is indeed, there is none in my confession. I think as I speak, before God and man. I had almost said it is impossible for me to be proud. If at any time Satan and my own heart take the advantage of a more than ordinary lively frame, and by the assistance of a more than usual share of spirits, I am carried through a service, the comparison of that with the many dull and plodding exercises, which connect with it, forbid me to be vain. It is probable the motives of my humiliation may be more from pride, than from a proper concern for the glory of God, my divine master; if this be the case, I am so much the greater sinner before him. Of this I would stand open to conviction. Our great mercy is that whatever may be our sin, there is an infinity of pardon for it. But it should be our care not to make work for repentance, by indulging sin, or to sin that grace may abound, and thus abuse the information we have of the plenitude of salvation, and the efficacy there is in the blood of Jesus, to cleanse us from all sin."

To Mr. S—r, of B——s. "I do not wonder you derived advantage from the ordination of Mr. Hickman. I always attend upon such an occasion, interested in all the advice given to the ordained, and frequently discover a remissness and deficiency that humbles me before God. Not having life to live over again, my convictions of what I have in many instances detected to have been wrong, humble me. I despair of fetching up time past. The decay of nature, which gradually advances, will not admit of my using time present as I ought. I must therefore die repenting, and throw myself upon the mercy of God in Christ Jesus. He knows that I have always designed better than I have performed; and I must rely upon his compassion to pity the weakness that he knows has ever attended my frame, and pardon the sin which he equally knows has not been intentional, but cleaving to my most holy performances has polluted them. And the failure of putting into practice the resolutions I have formed, makes me cautious in renewing them."

In another letter. "Oh! blessed Jesus! may we all learn of him. But Oh! my dear madam, with what difficulty have I brought my heart to yield to one of his lessons since I saw you. I do not want, blessed be God, to be conformed to this world; but while I am indifferent to this world, I am not enough conformed to the image of the first-born among many brethren."

I would only add, that when a few years ago, I wrote a few verses in my native village, in which I of course was led to notice him as the instrument of my emerging from the deepest obscurity, upon my transmitting them to him: he wrote—"It is impossible I can keep the little poem to myself; and yet I truly blush at being the subject of so much honour as it intends me. I pray God that in the judgment-day, I may be found the consistent character such as I ought to be. From the many imperfections known to myself, I feel shame, while from my fellow-creatures I meet with applause, to which my dearest Jay contributes much. I sometimes tremble on this account. I know that I am not disposed to make an improper use of it, and am sure that it does not in the least divert me from the Saviour, whose name is all my trust. I need his mercy, and am in his service an unprofitable servant. If, like 'Charles, in Cowper,' I have been desirous to please, and have made any effort to serve acceptably, it is because I love my master, and wherein I can best serve him, I would be most willing." Such a disposition preserved him from complaint under inconveniences and trials: and

rendered him gratefully alive to the kindness of God and man. "I feel," says he, "as indifferent to every thing above the supply of food and raiment administered in a decent manner, as a dead man does to the coffin in which his remains are confined."

Again. "We are in silent submission, called in some respects to take up our cross. My old woman, Betty King,* has taken possession of my study. It is now a complete infirmary. To avoid enormous expense abroad, I have hereby entailed very considerable trouble upon my good wife at home; and as to myself, I am driven hither and thither for my retirement. But we are agreed in our conclusion, 'It is well,' and therefore we must not murmur; and indeed, by considering our appointment and our mercies, we are prevented. Our state is not helplessness; neither are we in want of the necessaries of life, as are many, very many about us; and when faith performs her office, and helps us to realize things to come, it produces a placid effect."

In another letter. "The latter part of my journey has been productive of a very serious cold, of which giddiness, deafness, an obstinate cough, and a continual fever, are properties. Had I only to nurse it, I should not be so sensible of its effects, as I am under ministerial duties, which require me to go abroad, and keep me fully employed at home. But who is without inconveniences? And who am I that I should be excused? Come forth to view my mercies, and excite my gratitude. They are present—my eyes behold them—my heart thinks upon them—and I am ashamed that their weight and number do not make greater impression upon me."

While humble in himself, he had a holy *confidence* in God that never forsook him. His faith was often tried; especially in the earlier periods of his ministry. But though he was sometimes left almost destitute, and there seemed no probability of relief, he was always enabled to believe in the promise, "Verily thou shalt be fed." And he had many instances of God's seasonable goodness to encourage him in his future dependence upon him: and by means of these he strengthened the minds of others.

Loose among his manuscripts, I very accidentally discerned a narrow slip of paper thus written.—"A. Dyer returns Mr. Winter her thanks for the books: as he may choose to increase his library, she begs to have the pleasure of contributing a trifle towards it." What the sum was, is not mentioned, but on the corner of the paper he had written—"I received this when I was exceedingly straitened, and I leave it with my papers, as one testimony among many, of the providential regard the Lord hath vouchsafed me. Reader, make him your confidence, and he will make you his care. July, 1776."

In 1789, his benefactor, the never to be forgotten Mr. Thornton, wrote to him.

"DEAR AND REVEREND SIR,—I inclose you £20, as I suppose your purse may be low.—I commend you to the grace and love of Jesus. May he long shine upon you and bless you.—My dear friend, yours affectionately, J. THORNTON."

On the corner of this, opposite the name of him who, unsolicited, had often supplied him, he wrote,—I keep this letter to record the mercy of the Lord. It was a time when I received it wherein I was destitute, and knew not where to look for supply; I was kept from fear and anxiety, and found the great advantage of faith. Bless the Lord, Oh my soul!

It is more than probable that many other acknowledgments of a similar kind are to be found in the multitude of his papers. It has been observed by Flavel, that they who notice providences will never want providences to notice. And a greater than he, had said long before from experience, as well as conviction, "Whoso is wise, and will observe these things, even they shall understand the lovingkindness of the Lord."

"As to temporal circumstances," says he, "I can leave them with Him who long since promised, and has been faithful to his word. He will supply all our need. I live upon the bounty of Providence, with as much certainty and pleasure as those can who command their thousands."

I feel that I tread on delicate ground, when I remark, that my dear and honoured friend frequently indulged a confidence arising from impression. There never was a man more free from enthusiasm, if we use that term as significant of an unwarrantable dependence upon God, or an expectation of the end without the use of the means. He pressed duty in all its relations; he was sober-minded, cautious, and prudent; yet it is certain that, in some of the most eventful circumstances of his life, his decision resulted very much at the time from a forcible impulse of mind which he could not feel himself at liberty to resist; and which indeed was fully satisfactory to himself. It is equally certain, that in taking these steps, he had no reason to repent: but was abundantly convinced by the consequences, that they were of God. We must not limit the holy one of Israel, nor yet be wise above what is written. "A good man's steps are ordered by the Lord; and he has said, in all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths." The promise is connected with the duty, and as the one is performed, the other is accomplished. Common Christians can hardly understand the peculiar advantages that arise from exalted spirituality

* One of his eleemosynary dependents.

of mind, and the most intimate degrees of devotedness to, and communion with God.

He had an holy and unshaken confidence as to his spiritual and eternal concerns. He knew whom he had believed, and was persuaded that he was able to keep that which he had committed to him against that day. This, under every event that naturally tends to alarm and distress, released him from anxiety, and kept his mind in perfect peace. He was not afraid of evil tidings, his heart was fixed, trusting in the Lord. A gentleman, Mr. Dodd, has just written to me to say, that he came over in the same vessel with him from America. He gives the same account of the dreadful storm as Mr. Winter has done in his Narrative: but he adds—"When all hope of being saved was taken away during this extremity—our impious captain fell on his knees, and intreated our neglected and injured friend to pray for him and the ship's company. No one can imagine with what dignity, composure, and kindness, this great and good man behaved himself, and what attention was paid to every word that dropped from his lips, as we were kneeling round him." He was always indeed raised above the fear of death, from which some are subject to bondage all through life. To him death was no more than a sleep, not only in reality but apprehension. The last time I was walking with him, he was speaking of his own dissolution. As I wished to know the state of his mind, and he had never been accustomed to *talk* of his assurance, I asked him how death appeared. He answered, "Very inviting." Aware of his having been generally enervated to a great degree, and supposing it possible that, like some good men, he might have felt a constitutional dread of death, I added, "Has it been always so?" He said, "Always. Blessed be God, ever since I knew him, I have been enabled to live in a waiting posture; and though I am not improperly weary of the world, having found much friendship and mercy in it, yet death is inviting."

One of his last students writes me, "That he often spoke with obvious pleasure of the approach of death. If a little pain of body seized him, he would frequently say with a smile, "Who can tell, but this may serve to introduce me to my Father's house!"

His early letters, of which I have looked over a great number, abound with joy and rapture; in those of later years there is less ecstasy, but much of that peace which passeth all understanding. Let a few extracts suffice to show the blessedness he enjoyed from the strength of his faith—it would be delightful to transcribe more of them.

"What wonderful events have occurred since we exchanged a letter!—But the Lord reigns, and he can preserve us. The overflowing scourge cannot pass through the land, but by his permission. What a mercy, to be the subjects of a state that war cannot effect, and to be able to look forward to a land where our eyes shall not see evil any more. This, my dear sir, is our discriminating mercy, and it does us good to be thinking of it. Happy would it be for all whom we love, if they would set their hearts upon that state, and in their minds connect the present and the last day together; and when gloomy thoughts are excited by political events, would banish the gloom by the consideration that the world to come, and into which we shall soon be transferred, knows nothing of the calamities to which this is ever subject. He who made all things has the reins of government in his hands, and all men at his control. And we are sure that he will overrule all the convulsions which distract the present times, and threaten the disturbance of the future. The storms will spend themselves, and the calm will ensue which will no more be interrupted, when all nations will be blessed. May we exercise faith upon whatever God has promised, and more immediately upon those promises which respect ourselves, our present concerns, and our eternal glory. We shall then rejoice while others mourn, and our joy no man taketh from us."

—"I catch the retirement of the morning to drop a few lines; I wish they may find you well in God. Then you will be prepared for sickness, should it please him to inflict it upon you. He knows how to deal with us. Nothing shall occur that is really evil in its consequences, if we love him and put our trust in him. If he designs our good we may submissively let him do his pleasure with us; it will terminate in everlasting happiness, and that is sufficient. In all the revolutions of your constitution, think of the state that undergoes no change, and where your youth will be renewed like the eagles. In sickness and in health it becomes us to meditate upon this; and it will be natural for us so to do, if we live under the influence of the Holy Spirit, and are taught so to number our days as that we apply our hearts unto wisdom. We live in a dying world, and must expect to die. He lives most properly who thinks more of death than of life, and thus dies daily, and lives with an ungrasping hand. I think it is not vanity nor pride in me to say, so I do. I may not, I shall not have done all I should wish when I come to die, but I do not therefore neglect to look forward, rather to a dying day than to a long life. What is it that can make death friendly to us, but an interest in the death of the blessed Jesus! He destroyed death, and him that had the power of death, in favour of all who make him their friend."

"I am much better than I was, but am yet under, I was going to say, complaint—but why should a living man complain, especially

the man whose ten thousand mercies stand opposed to a few, very few inconveniences! Through mercy, I know what it is to be fed with the hidden manna, and at this time I enjoy access with confidence into the holiest of all."

—"It is well we live as yet secure from invasion. I am inclined to think before war ceaseth I shall be in the realms of eternal peace: yet, as far as my reflections extend, I feel for posterity. But when I reflect that the Lord reigneth, I may dismiss my fears. He who governed the world long before I had my existence, will continue his reign long after I am out of the memory of every one. It is enough if I reign with him, or am one in the retinue in which he will be glorified."

—"This reminds us that we must shortly put off our tabernacle, and if we have put on the Lord Jesus, the sooner the better. I trust this is now become our case. The evidence of it keeps me unmoved by storms, and unshaken by tempests, though the awful falls of my neighbours jar me; and I cannot hear of them without being deeply affected. O how dreadful is it, to know the evil of sin by experience, after we have made a most glaring profession, that we know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ! Merciful Saviour! never suffer me to *fall* into that horrible pit. If I must *look* into it, hold me up in thy everlasting never-failing arms, and I shall be safe. The promise is sure; 'I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness.' But in order to its accomplishment, the precept must be attended to, watch thou in all things. O that I may never be unwatchful, till the enemies which assault me now shall assault me no more for ever. Then will be the time to put off the harness; and the pain of vigilance will be exchanged for the joy of rest."

—"There is a deal in this state of mortality to make us desire the change, but this desire should be regulated by a submission to the divine will. Sinful selfishness often pushes us toward heaven, rather than a growing heavenly frame; and if we desire it rather as a convenience, than for the sake of conformity to our blessed Saviour, the desire is itself sinful. We are not better than our fathers who passed through the same evil world, and found it the same as we do. Our duty is in patience to possess our soul, and to endeavour to bear with a Christ-like temper whatever comes upon us, till we are ripened and prepared for that glorious estate where our happiness will spring from our holiness, and we shall be made perfect in love."

—"At present, blessed be God, there is nothing in the world that charms me but what I shall enjoy to infinite perfection in the world of spirits."

—"Why should we fear? The grave is not to be a prison house but a bed-chamber. We should not be thrown into it as criminals, but kindly conducted to it as friends—there our toil will be at an end, our conflicts will cease for ever; endless joy will take place of transient sorrow, and an eternal weight of glory be the substitute for the afflictions of a moment."

"Here I am like a ship at anchor in a wind-bound condition, longing to sail to the haven of eternal rest. O what a day when I shall behold his face! I now find him the shadow of a great rock for refuge, and as rivers of water for refreshment. I have peace and quietness now; and assurance for ever in that which he calls me to possess"

—So SPOKE Aspasio, firm possest
Of faith's supporting rod;
Then breathed his soul into its rest,
The bosom of his God.

He was a man among the few,
Sincere on virtue's side;
And all his strength from Scripture drew,
To hourly use apply'd.

That rule he priz'd, by that he fear'd,
He hated, hop'd and lov'd:
Nor ever frown'd, nor sad appear'd,
But when his heart had rov'd.

For he was frail as thou or I,
And evil felt within:
But when he felt it heav'd a sigh,
And loath'd the thought of sin.

SUCH LIV'D Aspasio; and at last,
Call'd up from earth to heaven;
The gulf of death triumphant pass'd
By gates of blessings driven.

His Joys be *mine*, each reader cries,
When my last hour arrives;
They shall be yours, my verse replies,
Such only be *your lives*.

CHAPTER IV.

REMARKS.

THROUGH all the preceding pages, reflections have mingled with facts, and the perusal of the whole narrative, will, it is hoped, make some *useful* impressions. Yet knowing that people are generally more disposed to indulge their curiosity, than to aid their improvement, and that there is nothing, to which they are so indifferent as the application of what they either hear or read to themselves; it may not be improper to bring together in a distinct form, some additional remarks of practicable utility.

First. What improbable and marvellous changes often take place in the conditions of mankind! Many have reached an eminence, towards which, at one period of their lives they could not have aspired. Had the important vicissitudes through which they have passed, been previously foretold, they would have replied with the unbelieving nobleman; "If the Lord should make windows in heaven might such things be." What would have been the surprise of David, if a prophet had approached him when he was in

a field, sitting on a hillock, with the sheep at his feet, and his harp in his hand, and had opened to him the future scenes of his greatness! But by a train of events, led on by the Providence of God, he was called to exchange the shepherd's crook for the royal sceptre, and the cottage for the palace. In revolutions less splendid and striking, but not less strange and unlikely, he has led others by a way that they knew not. He has made darkness light before them, and crooked things strait. Difficulties which seemed insuperable have been overcome; and without a design formed by their friends, or a hope entertained by themselves, they have passed from obscurity to honour; from limitation to enlargement; from dependence, to be the support of others; from inability, to be the instruments of good to thousands. "He raiseth up the poor out of the dust, and lifteth the needy out of the dunghill; that he may set him with princes, even with the princes of his people." "It is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes."

It should teach us not to disregard those in humble life, especially poor children. "Despise not," said our Lord, "one of these little ones." And three reasons he assigns for it: angels are their attendants——"Their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven;" Jesus is their Saviour—"The Son of man is come to seek and to save that which is lost." God is their friend—"It is not the will of your Father which is in heaven, that one of these little ones should perish." Is it necessary to add, you know not what they may hereafter become; what in the destinations of heaven they already are. See that floating ark of bulrushes; it contains a weeping babe, abandoned to the perils of the Nile, in a state equivalent to the want of father or mother—but it carries the scourge of Pharaoh, the deliverer of Israel, the historian of the creation, the legislator miraculously commissioned, the prophet divinely inspired! Behold the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of his person! Where shall we originally find him! From what peculiarity of beginning, promissory of his future unexampled grandeur, does his illustrious course commence! Where is he that is born king of the Jews, king of nations, king of saints, king of glory! See that new-born infant, brought forth in a stable, wrapped in coarse swaddling clothes, and laid in a manger, because there was no room for him in the inn! These cases it will readily be allowed, are peculiar as well as extraordinary —but we may reason from them. They show us how liable we are to err, while judging after outward appearances; and how unanswerable present indications frequently are to future events. There are many around us unnoticed, in whom are lodged talents, which if roused by circumstances, and improved by diligence, would bless, if not astonish the church and the world. The subject of these Memoirs, was not only in a considerable degree, an instance himself of the truth of this remark, but an example also of the influence it should have upon the mind. He was observant of the neighbourhood in which he lived, and of the congregations in which he preached; he never overlooked the lower ranks of life, but endeavoured to draw forth and encourage every token of piety or talent, however destitute of external recommendation. How often would he say—

> "Full many a gem of purest ray serene,
> The dark unfathom'd caves of ocean bear;
> Full many a flower is born to blush unseen,
> And waste its sweetness on the desert air."

Secondly. We see what progress may be made under the greatest disadvantages. It is frequently the case, that those who have the means and opportunities of improvement, undervalue and neglect them; while others who are desirous of excelling, are denied these assistances. But diligence conquers the hardest things. An intense desire of knowledge will not suffer a man to be idle. It will create the helps it does not find. It will detach leisure from distraction, and solitude from company; it will keep open the eyes and the ears; and by lively, active, minute, habitual attention it will aggregate and multiply intellectual stores; it will render every place a school, and every occurrence a tutor; it will suffer nothing to be lost.

> "Some minds are temper'd happily, and mix'd
> With such ingredients of good sense and taste
> Of what is excellent in man, they thirst
> With such a zeal to be what they approve,
> That no restraints can circumscribe them more
> Than they themselves by choice, for wisdom's sake;
> Nor can example hurt them."—

None therefore should despair. Especially let young men, who wish to render themselves respectable and useful, by the cultivation of their minds and the acquisition of science, be encouraged. Let them see what individuals have become, who never enjoyed the advantages of a classical education, regular tuition, and ample libraries. How many instances might be mentioned, to refer only to modern times. And that which has been done, may be done—by assiduity and the divine blessing. And if any choose, in the possession of advantages which others want, to be idle and ignorant, let them remember that *their* case is not peculiar: there have been, and there are,

> "———————— Whom schools dismiss'd
> And colleges, untaught."—

Thirdly. We learn how much good may be done by small resources. The poor and miserable have seldom been much indebted to the rich and great. In general the demands of those in the higher circles of life

are equal to their supplies: for they have not only the requisitions of necessity, and convenience, and decency to satisfy, but those of pride, and luxury, and folly. An allowed distinction above the vulgar will not content them: they must be costly, and vie with each other in the splendour of appearance. And hence, whatever be their income, they have little to spare for benevolent purposes. Nor can it be supposed that their mode of life will allow them to be very familiar with scenes of indigence and distress. They will pass by on the other side, rather than approach the wounded traveller; the lamentable tale of wo must not mingle with their music; their feelings cannot bear to be shocked. "They send forth their little ones like a flock, and their children dance. They take the timbrel and harp, and rejoice at the sound of the organ. They spend their days in wealth, and in a moment go down to the grave."

But others do good and communicate without affluence. By small contributions often repeated, by applications to those who are more ready to give than to *do* alms; by the force of example reproaching and stimulating others; by self-denial, by economy, by contrivance; by numberless and nameless personal attentions, where nothing of a pecuniary nature is conferred; they are even rich in good works. It would be surprising to those whose "strength is to sit still," could they see what may be done by a single individual zealously disposed, and wisely employed. I fear we do not sufficiently make this business our object; for there is much truth in the remark of Richard Baxter, that our success commonly bears a much more exact proportion to our design, our desire, and our hope, than we are apt to imagine. Let this thought be enthroned in the mind. Let it influence ministers, parents, and individuals who are concerned to serve their generation according to the will of God. Let us lay it down as a principle, that no good effort is entirely useless. Let us never be discouraged, because we do not command an amplitude of means, but instead of bewailing what is impossible, let us labour to effect what is practicable. Let us never excuse our negligence, by accusing our stations—but remember that the ways of doing good are infinitely various; that they are found in every period of life; in every relation, in every condition, in every circumstance: that the luxury of doing good is so great, that the Father of Mercies has not confined it to a few; all may taste it; all cannot be liberal, but all may be kind; all cannot be generous, but all may be useful.

One is sometimes astonished to see the indifference with which the rich and great are carried to their long home.—There rolls by the procession. It is splendid; but not interesting. It attracts numbers; but not mourners. It gratifies curiosity; but it repels sympathy. The reason is obvious. What has *he* done; for whose happiness has *he* lived but—his own! Something of him will remain on the marble; but nothing written on the fleshly table of the heart. "I have seen the wicked in great power, and spreading himself like a green bay-tree. Yet he passed away, and lo, he was not; yea, I sought him, but he could not be found." But what a sensibility is produced by the loss of an individual who filled no public office, who possessed no large bags of gold and silver, who was hardly known twenty miles off.—He seemed insignificant. The ties that bound many to him were not known—but sickness awakened anxieties and inquiry, his death drew forth his dependents, and at the mouth of the grave was testified the importance which had been concealed in life.

I remember some years ago to have buried a corpse.—In the extremity of the audience that surrounded me—I discerned a female wrinkled with age, and bending with weakness—one hand held a motherless grandchild, the other wiped away her tears with the corner of a woollen apron.—I pressed towards her when the service was closed.—"Have you lost a friend?"—She heaved a melancholy sigh—"The Lord bless her memory!"—I soon found the deceased had allowed her for several years sixpence per week! O my God! is it possible that the appropriation of a sum so inconsiderable, may cause a widow's heart to sing for joy, and save the child of the needy!—Who would waste a *sixpence;* who would indulge themselves in extravagance; who would not deny themselves, to be able to secure the blessing of them that are ready to perish!

What we said with regard to the cause of the poor will equally apply to the cause of God. And this, as well as the former, was exemplified in the character we are reviewing. There is one thing I would peculiarly recommend to notice. It is the service he has rendered to the church of Christ, by his training up young men to labour in the gospel; with regard to several of whom he had no other support than casual assistance. "It has long been my opinion," says he, in one of his letters, "that if every minister would keep a young man under his care, and nurse him for God, it would prove a blessing of no inconsiderable extent, supposing that while he is obliged to learn, he be also permitted to teach."

Let us not be slothful, but followers of them who, through faith and patience inherit the promises. Our opportunities of doing good will soon be over, and they are as uncertain as they are short.

Fourthly. What an impression is made by constant and consistent goodness. No character indeed however holy, and however

amiable, will elude all opposition or reflection in passing through life. Even among his religious connexions he may suffer, and be wounded in the house of his friends. Some of those who profess godliness have not the Spirit of Christ, and are none of his. Really good men have their imperfections and prejudices. Their minds are not always polished by education, or enlarged by knowledge. Their habits of thinking are often extremely limited. They view every subject through a key-hole. They cannot take those enlarged views of things which are necessary to do justice to a superior character, and therefore may misconstrue his motives when they are most pure, and censure his plans when they are most wise. They may condemn his prudence as cowardice, and his candour as a want of zeal.

And if these things be done in the green-tree, what shall be done in the dry? There is a reproach irreparably attached to the cross. Genuine religion never can be really loved by the natural man. "The spirit of the world," and "the spirit that is of God," are so opposite to each other, that before there can be a cordial union and harmony, one of them must be changed. It is not difficult to determine in which of these the change must take place. Indeed it is already determined; "Be not conformed to this world; but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God." He who was fairer than the children of men, said to his disciples, "If ye were of the world, the world would love its own; but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you." To those who did not believe on him, he said, "The world cannot hate you; but me it hateth, because I testify of it, that the works thereof are evil." The reasoning from hence is easy, and the application needless.—But our Saviour could say, "Which of you convinceth me of sin!—"Many good works have I showed you from my Father; for which of these works do ye stone me?" The enemies of Daniel were forced to confess; "We shall not find any occasion against this man, except we find it against him concerning the law of his God." In agreement with which is the language of the apostle: "If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you. On their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified. But let none of you suffer as a murderer, or as a thief, or as an evil doer, or as a busy body in other men's matters." Hence it appears, that there is a reproach very distinguishable from that which results from our cause, and for which *we* are accountable. And this may be, and will be avoided by a conscientious and exemplary uniformity, so that no evil thing can be said of us.

By means of this we adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour; we put to silence the ignorance of foolish men;—while others are even won without the word, and constrained to glorify God in the day of visitation: according to the admonition of our Lord: "Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven." How powerful is the silent eloquence of a holy and blameless life. Actions speak louder than words; and practice might be rendered more useful than preaching. It is an awful consideration that we are "the epistles of Christ," and by reading us, the world will judge of our religion; "What manner of persons therefore ought we to be in all holy conversation and godliness!" How careful should we be to make a righteous and a favourable impression, by the influence of our character.

How lamentable it is to observe in Ritchie's "Life of Hume," that such a man as Dr. Robertson, *could* be addressed in the language of profane swearing; but this undeniably appears in the letters of the philosopher to him; and by parity of reasoning, we may conclude that in the same style he was often greeted in conversation too.* We all know how a consciousness of the character we are addressing affects us both in our correspondence and our discourse. There are men with whom every one would feel it as impossible to use irreligious improprieties, as to throw mud in the king's face; the majesty of the being would defend him. There is something defective, especially in a minister, unless his character produces an atmosphere around him, which is felt as soon as entered. He, even more than a Christian, is a representative of Deity, and the place whereon he standeth is holy ground. It is not enough for him to have courage to reprove certain things, he should have dignity enough to prevent them—and he will—if the Christian be commensurate with the preacher, and he walks worthy of God, who has called us unto his kingdom and glory. This was the case with the man of God, whose loss we deplore. What he professed to be, he was, *invariably and throughout.* In his character there was nothing to be concealed; nothing to be propped. It was an assemblage of excellency that would bear the closest inspection, and it struck every beholder. It was impossible to be an infidel near him. Every one saw in

* See a most eloquent and impressive notice of this book in the Eclectic Review for January, 1808. I cannot help availing myself of an opportunity to recommend this review most earnestly to the attention of my religious readers in particular, and of the public in general. He surely has not candidly inspected this valuable publication, who does not allow that its literary merit, its liberal principles, and its evangelical tendency, entitle it to extensive encouragement.

him the truth, the efficacy, the glory of the gospel. No one that approached him could be wicked; he was ashamed of every thing sinful, till he got out of the reach of his voice; the sight of his person, and the remembrance of his name. He did much good in the pulpit, but unspeakably more out of it. He taught publicly, and also from house to house: but when nothing was said, he was always instructing, reproving, admonishing, and encouraging by his heavenly example. His life crowned his labours. What he did was enforced by what he was.

Fifthly. We are led to reflect on the advantages of evangelical religion. It must be allowed that the deceased discovered the spirit, and exemplified the life of a Christian in no common degree. But it may be contended, that the character we have pourtrayed was independent of the principles which he had adopted; and that he was so excellent, notwithstanding his sentiments, rather than as the result of them. Such an insinuation can only arise from an unhappy indisposition to admit evidence in favour of what are called, the doctrines of grace: nor is there any plausible ground for the supposition. Every man that deserves the name of a character, and in proportion to his excellence, lives not accidentally, but by rule: he moves not uncertainly, but is governed by some fixed views and motives: he does not leave the vessel to the current, or the wind; he has a port in view, a rudder, a compass. Hence you know such a person; you can rely upon him; you can determine previously the course he will take in such an occurrence of circumstances. It is otherwise with a man who has no principles. He is the creature of whims, and of events. You have no hold of him; nor can he rely upon himself.

No person could exhibit more consistency than was to be found in the character of Mr. Winter. There was the most exact conformity between his actions and his sentiments; and from the seed sown, you knew the grain that was to spring up. The doctrines he professed, he most firmly believed. He originally embraced religion in the form of them; he habitually viewed it through no other medium. These doctrines with him were not distant and occasional speculations; they were brought into daily use; they mingled with all his devotional exercises. He was concerned to advance in the life of godliness—he knew what it was that most favourably impressed him—he was incapable of avowing influences which he never felt, and advantages which he never enjoyed—but such, living and dying were his acknowledgments in honour of the sentiments he had embraced and examined. He was alive to the welfare of others; his design was not to make them proselytes to a party, but real, and practical and useful Christians; and had he not been persuaded that the adoption of these religious views would have the most salutary influence, he would not in public, and in private, and in his correspondence, have recommended them. It will be observed for what purpose I here mentioned these things; it is only to prove that these doctrines were in him not opinions, but principles. For if principles are operative causes, if they are grounds of action, if they are leading motives, his religious sentiments were principles of his character; they were at once the springs of his consolation, and of his conduct too.

But if this be allowed, surely it follows that they are not deserving of the treatment they have so often encountered. They have indeed frequently been reprobated, as of the most pernicious tendency with regard to ourselves, our fellow-creatures, and above all, God himself. But I here see a man under their governance—with regard to *God*, full of love, and of confidence, always concerned to please him, and always rejoicing in him; thankful for his favours, and resigned to his corrections:—with regard to *others*, universally benevolent as to their welfare, full of pardon as to their faults, and of pity as to their miseries; pleading their cause, and relieving their wants:—with regard to *himself*, neither inclined to licentiousness, nor self-conceit; nor trusting in his own righteousness, nor despising others; as watchful as prayerful; abhorring merit, but delighting in obedience; delivered from the tyranny of unhallowed appetites and passions; exercising self-denial; possessing peace of conscience; relishing with moderation the enjoyments of life, but willing to leave them; viewing death with solemnity, yet raised above the fear of it.

If persons will not trace by reasoning the connexion there is between these principles and this practice, they may appeal to fact, and learn that these truths have had the best influence over the heart and life. The conclusion is obvious. "Do men gather grapes from thorns, or figs from thistles?" It is natural to suppose that divine truth will have a powerful influence over those who truly embrace it: we know that the gospel is a doctrine according to godliness: we are sure that when it was originally delivered, it awakened in men a supreme concern for the salvation of the soul, induced them to forsake the present evil world, and filled them with zeal to be useful to others; it turned them from dumb idols, to serve the living God, and to wait for his Son from heaven, even Jesus, who delivered us from the wrath to come; to worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh: to account all things but loss for the excellency of the Redeemer's knowledge, and constrained by his love, to live, not unto themselves, but to him that died for them and rose again. This is a very brief and im-

perfect relation of the effects of evangelical doctrine upon those who heard the gospel at first. But it is sufficient for our purpose. It may be well to ask, what kind of preaching, in our day, produces the same kind of living? Wherever it is found, it has the signature of Deity upon it: and nothing but ignorance and inattention can deny the importance of it.

Lastly. What a stimulus have we here to pious excellency. There is a great difference between the reality of religion and the degree of it. A man may be alive and not well; he may be able to subsist, and not be rich—but we are required to be *rich* in faith, and in good works; and not only to have life, but to have it more abundantly. There are consolations and privileges which depend on growth in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour: and a Christian should be ambitious of obtaining them. He should not be satisfied with a conviction of his safety. His soul should prosper. He should be concerned for the welfare of his generation, and the glory of his God. He should "Follow the Lord wholly" with Caleb; and, with Paul, "Forget the things that are behind, and reach forth unto those things that are before, and press towards the mark for the prize of his high calling of God in Christ Jesus."

This is the way to seize the prerogatives of the Christian. Such as these, God not only saves, but dignifies. He crowns them in eternity, and he owns them here. Whatever freedom there may be in the operations of his grace, in dispensing honour he always observes a rule, and he has told us what it is—"Them that honour me, I will honour, and they that despise me shall be lightly esteemed."—"Therefore hath the Lord recompensed me according to my righteousness, according to the cleanness of my hands in his eye-sight. With the merciful thou wilt show thyself merciful; with an upright man thou wilt show thyself upright; with the pure thou wilt show thyself pure; and with the froward thou wilt show thyself froward; for thou wilt save the afflicted people; but wilt bring down high looks."

"THEREFORE, MY BELOVED BRETHREN, BE YE STEADFAST, UNMOVEABLE, ALWAYS ABOUNDING IN THE WORK OF THE LORD; FORASMUCH AS YE KNOW THAT YOUR LABOUR IS NOT IN VAIN IN THE LORD."

PART III.

CHAPTER I.

EXTRACTS FROM HIS DIARY.

EVERY thing that habituates us to sacred retirement; that leads us to self-inspection, and promotes self-acquaintance; that causes us to review past events, and examine what improvement we have made of them; that produces comparisons between our present and former experience, either for our reproof or encouragement—is confessedly valuable.

Hence good men have been accustomed to write diaries. It was known that Mr. Winter approved of such a custom, and I hoped that among his papers I should find a complete journal. But in this I was disappointed.

I saw in a letter to one of his friends, the following acknowledgment—"I have been guilty of a capital omission—the neglect of a regular diary." Even this did not destroy a hope that several interesting portions of his life had been recorded by him. But all that has been discovered consists of nothing more than two fragments, began early in his public life, and soon relinquished.

Nor are these distinguishable by any thing superior in the subject, or the execution. The whole is too much in the form of the Methodistical registers of this kind, which, though they may be useful in a degree, are surely very capable of improvement. If it be proper to make daily observations, it is not always necessary to write them. For this purpose perhaps weekly retrospects, or annual reviews, would be preferable. By this means their sameness might be varied, and their dulness enlivened. They might be rendered less minute and more important. They might be extended beyond the detail of one class of feelings, and which are often misunderstood as to their cause and indications; for how frequently is it the case, that no distinction is made between the variations of the animal frame, and the operations of spiritual agency; between physical and moral inabilities and fervours.

Of the plan we would recommend, we have a pattern in Dr. Doddridge; and no one can help grieving that more of his diary was not made public. We there see a man not only looking backward, but forward; not only complaining, but resolving; not only praying, but striving; attentive indeed to his pains and pleasures in the divine life, but always connecting with practice—you see him investigating his moral character, as well as his spiritual state; you see what methods he took to conquer evil propensities, and to strengthen religious habits; you see how he kept alive the zeal that carried him through so many difficulties, and acquired the patience that supported him under so many trials.

Short and imperfect as these manuscripts are, I shall here present a few pages of them. They serve to show the pious state of the writer's mind, and may convince the reader that the exercises which he has often been led to consider as peculiar to himself, have been the familiar experience of the Lord's people: and should therefore prove way-marks rather than stumbling-blocks.

"Once they were mourning here below,
And wet their couch with tears;
They wrestled hard, as we do now,
With cries, with doubts, and fears."

"I find from a recollection of past circumstances, I have been very remiss in not continuing a method of keeping a diary of the dealings of God with me, but now, by thy grace assisting me, I will remark thy goodness, O Lord, who art plenteous in redemption, and abundant in goodness and in truth. A more proper opportunity I cannot have than in the ever memorable instance of thy salvation, O Lord, this 25th day of October, in which I enter into the 25th year of my age, at which time the Lord was pleased to give me an humbling sense of my wretchedness, in so much that I could not help weeping much in secret, on account of my own unworthiness, and his all-sufficient grace. —Was much assisted in this view by reading Gen. xviii. xix. Wrote to M———, visited a friend, and had reason to say, hitherto hath the Lord helped me.

"*Tuesday* 26.—In the morning continued my usual studies; breakfasted with sister S——, there met a poor desponding woman; endeavoured to recommend the Lord Jesus Christ, to speak of his precious promises. Dined with Mr. S——; our conversation was not light, but turned more upon the creature, than the Creator.—Received a letter from Mr. W——d, desiring me to return directly. In the afternoon visited poor Mrs. B——l, with others, where we sung hymns and prayed. I expounded the thirty-second chapter of Isaiah, first and second verses. Our opportunity was solid; there was something of the Lord's power manifested. I find it very useful to employ myself in those exercises among my friends, as it keeps out frothy conversation, and furnishes me with spiritual matter preparative to public work. In the evening, supped with brother H——n; the evening was spent in reading the Scripture, singing, prayer, and narrations of the Lord's providence, which shows that he is good and gracious.

"*Thursday* 27.—This morning set out for London; was much assisted in my meditation by the autumn season. Breakfasted at Mr. H——'s, arrived in London at two in the afternoon; my time in the boat was spent in silent prayer and reading. I could not get opportunity, nor find freedom to speak to any of the company, all of whom were abandoned people, but not so intolerably outrageous as some I have been with there. Mr. W——t received me kindly; when I came home with him went to Tottenham-court chapel, where Mr. J—— read many letters of the gospel progress; Mr. W——d explained many things in them.—Though my body was weak, my soul was as the chariot of Aminadab. I could rejoice, not for myself only, but for them who had obtained like precious faith, and believe I shall sit down with them at the marriage supper of the Lamb."

"*Sunday* 30.—If I forget this day, let my right hand forget her cunning! I rose in the morning at four, with a scripture on my heart; my former day's conflict was vanquished, and this was the language of my heart, 'My soul thirsteth for God, even for the living God; when shall I come and appear before God?' Luke xxii. 37. 'The things concerning me have an end,' was applied with great power. —On the road, could not help weeping much on account of sin; and a sense of the Lord's goodness to me, with a sight of the unparalleled love of Jesus, so broke my heart, I could hardly help disturbing the congregation; but the Lord kept me, and I hope put my tears into his bottle. Was much refreshed under Mr. W——d's sermon, from Acts xvi. 13—15."

"*Thursday, Nov.* 10.—Arose as I went to bed; had been much tempted all night, but enabled to take comfort from that precious promise, 'I have prayed for thee.' Wrote to Mr. J——s, and Mr. M——d breakfasted with me and Miss B——n; our conversation was upon the favourite topic. Mr. W——d arrived at eleven, which gave me great joy; was much laid out in prayer for him, that the Lord may prolong his days.—Dined with the poor at Mr. I——d's, endeavoured to improve the opportunity; was very dead till I began to expound the sixth chapter of John, when I found my heart deeply affected.—Visited Mrs. S——r in the close of the day; she still continues a mourner in Sion; the Lord grant she may reap in joy."

"*Thursday* 17.—This morning rose at four o'clock; had much conversation with Mr. ——. Was much alarmed at some intimation of one who hath left poor evidences of conversion, after glaring profession. Lord give me to walk circumspect! In the forepart of the day was led into some comfortable discoveries of salvation. In the afternoon, preached at Kingswood, from Matt. xi. 28. had nothing particular. Supped with Mr. W——d at Mrs. D——y's, who is a discreet and well-taught woman. Various was our conversation, and to some profit. Returned home at nine o'clock, went to bed under great bodily weakness. Lord be the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever."

"*Saturday* 19.—Busily employed in writing all day to my dear friends; was much comforted in meditation. In the afternoon was much alarmed in hearing of dear Mr. W——d's sudden illness, which he writes of as fatal. The Lord prepare us for the awful event, and grant that it may not be in judgment. In the evening met the children, with whom I found much liberty; and being much wearied with the work of the day, retired to bed in a sleepy condition. Slept but uneasy all night, owing, as I suppose, to the news

from Bath; but am confident of the Lord's tender care over his church, and his abundant goodness towards her. Lord, number me with her members, and grant I may not be a stranger to the comforts and blessings of the people."

"*Sunday* 20.—This morning waked with my soul fixed upon God. Preached from Matt. vi. 21. a large congregation of serious people; I had much liberty in my soul. At ten, preached at Kingswood, from Heb. iv. 16. it was a feeling time. Dined at Mr. T——'s, where I found great bodily weakness, was obliged to lie on the bed for two hours, O happy day when I shall know no more pain! In the evening preached from Psalm xcv. 7, 8.—I just got through the opportunity safely, but not comfortably; the congregation was very large and all attentive, O that my hard heart could have felt more for sinners than it did. Hear by Mr. R——s, Mr. W——d is dangerous; Lord, prepare us for the awful stroke! I felt much from it last night, and am apprehensive I have a bitter draught to drink."

"*Wednesday* 23.—After prayer with a few friends, set out for London, rode all the way by myself, was sweetly refreshed in reading my New Testament, and felt the power of these words, 'Jesus, thou son of David, have mercy on me!' At particular times had discoveries of the promised land and a good hope, through grace, that I should enjoy it. Laboured under much weakness of body in my journey, but the Lord was the strength of my heart."

"*Monday* 28.—This morning I wrestled against flesh and blood, and with the Lord for the conquest; when my countenance is smooth and serene, none but God knows what a rough heart it shadows; found the battle was the Lord's. Dined with Mr. W——d at Mr. S——n's, occasional conversation caused most of us to weep, my memory will always retain the subject; rode with Mr. W——d to Mr. C——l, a backslider from the truth he once rejoiced in, how is he now filled with his own ways!"

"*Tuesday* 8.—Dined with Mr. W——d at Mrs. H——ge's, with some of lady H——n's friends, conversation profitable. Mr. W——d's remark was, 'God always makes use of strong passions for a great work.' He wept bitterly in prayer, and in which the whole company was moved."

"*Thursday, December* 15.—Was much relieved from my late burden, though much tempted to doubt of the perpetuity of God's love, but was enabled to commit my way unto the Lord, expecting he will bring it to pass."

"*Friday* 16.—Much of this day was spent in sorting my letters. I think myself happy in enjoying so many valuable correspondents. Oh that I may follow them, as they follow Christ! In the evening visited my sister-in-law, whom I found in dying circumstances, but without any apparent knowledge of God. —Prayed with her, and attempted to converse with her, but flesh failed."

"*Monday* 26.—This morning rose between six and seven, but poorly in body, comfortable in my soul. After breakfast walked with Mr. H——d to chapel; conversed part of the way of the things of God, much to my comfort.—Preached from 'His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor.' My soul was much at liberty. Dined with Mr. W——d, and was enlivened by the table talk. Mrs. S——k's relation of her experience, was of great use to me, and taught me how easily God could pull down every thought that exalteth itself."

From another diary begun 1775.

"*Tuesday, December* 13.—This day I left Lancaster, was in much weakness; many trials and many temptations I have been labouring under for five months; our parting was solemn and affecting. Lord grant the seed sown may bring forth fruit to thy glory. —Preached a farewell discourse at Garstang, had liberty in my soul. Text, Matthew xxv. 6."

"*Wednesday* 14.—After a comfortable lodging at Billsborough, and much edifying discourse with the family, proceeded to the field, and preached at night from Acts xx. 32. It was a time of refreshment to my soul. Poor R——— parted with grief; I was much affected. Blessed be God, we have a prospect of a glorious meeting by and by."

"*Saturday* 16.—Was much interrupted in study this day; had many agreeable interviews with friends; but in the evening found my spirits low, and my mind very languid: O Lord quicken me according to thy word."

"*Sunday* 17.—This day has been a day of fat things; spiritual blessings multiplied on me abundantly. Mr. M———'s morning and evening sermons were a great comfort to me. I preached in the afternoon, but alas! though not altogether without help, how lifeless when compared with what I read. O that I may have a more growing acquaintance with my Bible, and a more experimental knowledge of the great truths it reveals!"

"*Monday* 25.—This has been a day of continual hurry; very lifeless in preaching, both at Hardwicke and Wem; my body faint and weak, my mind continually agitated, every thing seems gloomy. I am in a straight, whether to settle or continue an itinerant; I fear to take another step. Lord, direct me!"

"*Saturday* 30.—Studied the Hebrew Scriptures much this day, together with the English. Wrote letters and prepared for the pulpit; in general was refreshed, but towards night felt an awful gloom come upon my mind from considering the state of our colonies. If they are ruined, are not we the

cause? Lord! the sin is ours. Pardon us, and pity them."

"*Sunday* 31.—Awoke this morning with a frame suitable to the close of the year; found it good to draw near to the Lord; heard my old friend Mr. H——— at Shawbury church, from Psalm xc. 12. it was a rousing sermon, profitable to my soul. I preached at Hardwicke at night, with more liberty than usual. Some conversation passed with Mrs. P———s, and I retired to bed in much serenity of mind. O that I may begin the new year with a new heart, and renewed in the spirit of my mind."

"*Saturday, January* 6.—Came to Wem, found my soul in a spiritual frame, enjoyed liberty in family prayer, but barren in private prayer. Retired to bed in much weakness of body; Oh that my soul may be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might!"

"*Monday* 8.—Slept little and very bad. In the night rose very poorly, spent the morning in reading and writing to Mr. S———t. Came to Whitchurch in the afternoon; a bad day to ride in, but the Lord was my Preserver. At night he proved very gracious to me, by giving me much light, life, and liberty while speaking from Isaiah xii. 3—6. How pleasant it is to work for God, when God is with us in our work."

"*Saturday* 20.—Found myself dull and stupid a great part of the day. Was much in retirement, read the Scriptures in the original, and closed the day with a sweet calm on my soul. Had never a more lively faith in Jesus, and a more heartfelt sense of his love."

"*Friday* 25.—After spending the day in company with many friends, I walked to Hardwicke, pretty comfortable in my soul. I dropped an inadvertent word this day, that much grieved me. What need have we to say, Set a watch, O Lord, over my lips."

"*Sunday, February* 4.—Sorely beset with my own heart. O how hard a matter to get into a spiritual frame. I am a teacher of others, and have much to learn myself. Through mercy was able to pay close attention to Mr. M———dy's sermon, text, Cant. i. 7. I preached twice with some liberty, the more to be remarked in the evening, because I went into the pulpit very sapless in my own mind. In my evening retirement was much struck with that part of Gurnal's Christian Armour, which treats of human learning, necessary furniture, levity to be avoided by ministers in preaching, and other interesting particulars. I bless thee, O Lord, for every thing that rouses my stupid, and quickens my dead soul."

"*Friday* 9.—Had a very providential journey to Drayton, escaping heavy weather which began and continued to fall all the afternoon. Studied the Greek Testament, and preached in the evening; but was very much straitened though several were comforted. Lord, help me to be any thing or nothing in thy hand, as thou pleaseth, only let it go well with my soul; then I have nothing to fear nor any thing to wish."

"*Wednesday* 28.—Continued at Wellington, and preached from the parable of the virgins; in the course of this day have been variously exercised. I find there is no getting to heaven without perpetual conflicts. 'Thanks be to God who giveth me the victory.'"

"*Friday, March* 1.—Read Mr. Hervey, and conversed much with Miss ———, on the doctrines of the gospel; dined with Mr. Y——k, and came afterwards to Wheaton Ashton. Preached with freedom, taken very ill afterward, and thought the hour of my departure was at hand. Most of the night was in great sinking of spirit, but recovered enough to enable me to rise at two, and proceed early on my journey; came to Drayton at noon, and retired and made my will with peculiar solemnity on my spirits, but no dread of death. The whole night was very bad, and expected nothing less than that I was going into a violent fever; could hardly lift my head from the pillow."

"*Wednesday* 13.—Spent part of the morning in canvassing Mr. Fletcher's manuscripts, but we could come to no agreement in sentiment. We parted in peace and love, and I had a pleasant ride to Wheaton Ashton, where I preached in the evening upon Luke xviii. 14. to a little attentive company; spent the evening profitably with Mr. W———s, and, in submission to the will of God, left him."

"*Thursday* 14.—Spent the day at Sherifhale, all the company not very agreeable, retired to study and read the Scriptures, was happy in my soul, spoke at night from Romans i. 16. had no liberty. Whenever I lose my feelings, Lord, let it be to prove my faith, and not as the effect of my sin."

"*Sunday* 17.—Have reason to be thankful for the morning opportunity while expounding the parable of the publican; and the residue of the day, till near six in the evening, was spent in reading and conflicting with my own heart; O what a vail does the enemy throw over my mercies, to prevent the sight of them; Lord, rend it! Preached at Shawbury and obtained a little liberty, glory to God. Spent the evening and lodged comfortably with my dear friend, Mr. H———d. May I be more thankful for my mercies, and less subject to complain of my crosses."

"*Wednesday* 27.—Wrote to my cousin, and spent a very agreeable morning in retirement at Marchemley, preached in the evening with no very extraordinary freedom, had but an indifferent night. Mr. ———'s conversation was edifying, I am ashamed of my own preaching when I hear a rehearsal of

his sermons. Lord, help me to improve, as well as blush."

"*Tuesday, April* 23.—Came early to Wotton this morning, a sweet ride indeed; the rest of the morning I spent retired, and found it good to be alone. Drank tea, conversed, and prayed with the Miss A——s and Miss D——r. The Lord was with us of a truth. O that every interview with my friends may be thus honoured!"

"*Saturday, May* 4.—Spent the morning in occasional reading; the afternoon had a short interview with brother C——m. I noticed some things he said with pleasure. Slept at dear Mr. E——s's, found him in a soft frame; was enabled to give him some important reproofs; he took them kind, and we parted, I hope the better for our interview."

"*Wednesday* 15.—Dined with Mr. ——, of Ebley; conversation not the most profitable. Pardon me, O Lord, that I do not meet my friends more like a minister of Christ."

"*Monday* 20.—Breakfasted with Mr. Hill at Ebley; taking a farewell of my dear friend Mr. E——s, who is going to Italy. His mind seems exceedingly dissipated and unhinged from Jesus; the Lord restore him! Conversation turned too much on politics, too little on Christ. Mr. Hill set off in the afternoon for London, in a sweet spirit. On the whole this has been a day of dissipation."

"*Tuesday* 21.—Returned to Painswick, conversed with brother H——g, but not to my satisfaction. I find I want grace to bear with the weakness of my brethren. May they have grace to bear with mine!"

CHAPTER II.

A SELECTION OF LETTERS.

THE number of Mr. Winter's correspondents was peculiarly great. Exclusive of the letters, which as having nothing worthy of preservation, were destroyed as he received the ; and the several hundreds which he burnt during his last illness—some thousands fell into the hands of the examiners of his papers. Their variety is as striking as their number. They are from persons of all denominations of religion; of all conditions in life. Equally observable also are the greatness of the esteem, and the warmth of the regard they express.

As all these were in answer to letters which he had written, or rendering it necessary for him to write, it is easy to see how much of his attention correspondence engrossed. He more than once complained of the obligations he had contracted; and frequently cautioned his young men not to follow his example. In one case at least this advice I fear was pursued to the extreme; and this he equally censured. The writer is the guilty individual. When therefore I had my last interview with my venerable friend, he asked me—for he was willing if possible, to learn of those he had taught, to sketch the outline of a sermon from the words, "His letters say they are weighty," I complied: but in presenting it, expressed my wonder at the choice of the subject, and intimated that I could hardly deem it important enough, for the edification of an audience, many of whom could not write at all. He smiled: and I saw he had gained his object. In this way he had insinuated a mild reproof. He had drawn from me some reflections, on the utility and importance of letter writing, by which I own I was condemned.

To excel in epistolary writing, is an enviable accomplishment, and may be rendered an instrument of great profit, as well as of pleasure. But every one has not a talent that is very ready or edifying. This, however, the deceased had in a peculiar degree. He wrote with uncommon facility; and his letters were so full of hints derived from his own circumstances, or applicable to those of his correspondents; they were enriched with such a vein of experimental religion; they exhibited so much of the Christian and of the friend united, that if I had not been urged by others, I should have been disposed to publish some of them with the memoirs of his life.

Aware, however, that in general too many private letters are made public, I determined to keep the selection within bounds: but I now find that I must reduce the allotted number for want of room, materials having multiplied as I advanced with the work. Hence my perplexity of choice, which was considerable before, is greatly increased, nor can I presume to say that the very few which have been taken, are preferable to many that remain. Those of a pastoral nature seemed to have a claim: the rest furnish a variety, and turn on some useful and interesting topic. It was not deemed necessary to observe very strictly the order of time in which the letters are dated.

Several friends have written requesting me to send forth an additional number of his letters in a separate work. To them I take this opportunity to observe, that what is very interesting to us, may not be equally so to others: that a sufficiency is here furnished to serve by way of specimen: and that if a wish for more be generally expressed, I shall feel pleasure to indulge it. Of copies and originals, enough have come into my hands, to make volumes; and they are all valuable.

To Mr. ——, respecting his settlement at Marlborough.

"DEAR SIR,—If the few lines I wrote to

you from Gritenham engaged your attention, or in any degree raised your expectation, I am sure my promise being protracted must tire your patience in proportion. But two things are my apology, one is, that I have been in such an unsettled state that unfitted me to write upon the occasion; the other is, that I had no objection to let a matter of so great importance rest, till I could well deliberate upon it in my own mind. The very signal kind ess you have shown the gospel, from its first entrance into Marlborough until now, deservedly entitles you to the representation of the people who profess it: I therefore suppose myself speaking to the church or society through you, and am persuaded in you they will find a tender, steady, and affectionate friend. I told you in my last, I found my mind bend towards the people, I should have added supposing they are unanimous in the choice of a pastor; for neither am I under a necessity to change my present sphere from any distraction in it, nor would I upon any consideration be the means of dividing them, nor come among them, if already divided among themselves. It is but reasonable if I enter into a pastoral relation with them, that they should know what I am, and what I wish for, in order to be happy in that relation. I am a Dissenter upon principle, though but a young one, having given the preference to the establishment till within these two years. As I am honest to my convictions, so I am moderate in my conduct, presuming that neither system is so complete but they both would admit of an amendment; and as an evangelical minister in either community would wish to do good, he can no further succeed than as he is disposed to throw aside such rigour and austerity as are nowhere countenanced in Scripture, nor were encouraged by the apostle of the Gentiles, or the Master of that apostle. A compliance with the most eligible methods for usefulness, if thereby we may gain some to the faith, is compatible with a strict regard to the word of God. When I profess myself a Calvinist, and tell you that I preach nothing repugnant to that scheme of divinity, you may suppose the grand and leading truths of the gospel in their turn are sincerely, though imperfectly preached by me; nor am I content to deliver them as a mere system. Their influences felt and experienced can only render them beneficial; nor can they be felt but as they are preached, in a practical experimental manner, in the demonstration of the Spirit and with power. Thus to preach is my endeavour, and to come short of it is my sorrow. My wish in the first place, is to be useful and happy. Something must be materially wrong when a man can be content to live a course of years with a people in the sacred relation of a pastor, regardless whether his people thrive or pine away under him. As such a person answers the character of the negligent shepherds, Ezekiel xxxiv. 3, 4. his doom must be that of the careless watchman mentioned in the foregoing chapter. Usefulness must be the basis of true happiness: the minister purchases his happiness at a dear rate who suffers his people to sleep in their sins.—Secondly, that I may have a discretionary power to make an excursion from home, upon condition of substituting a proper supply. Such a stipulation may be considered by some a weakness, and subversive of the end of the pastoral engagement; but I apprehend this must arise from prejudice and mistake. Be assured, dear sir, I have no intention to subvert the end of a home by continually being abroad. I have more than ten years known the want of a retreat, and with pleasure anticipate what Marlborough may (through the divine blessing) afford. Nevertheless to me it appears scriptural to blend the itinerant with the pastor, so far as the former does not prevent a due discharge of the duties of the latter; and that, under proper regulation, it is profitable both to minister and people, is evident by comparing the prosperity of those societies that encourage it with those that disapprove it.—Third, that my stipend, if consistent with the circumstances of the people, may commence at £40 *per annum*, and if prosperity should attend our union, and by change of condition I should find it necessary, I may be at liberty to ask no more. This article being well thought of and honourably settled, will become a rule for my conduct both in domestic economy, and in the pursuit of social happiness. I am well aware that my subsistence much depends upon the consistency of my deportment, the success of my ministry, and the circumstances and disposition of the people. As I would make the glory of God and their good my sole aim, I am willing to rest the issue upon these concomitants. It is too late in the day for me to begin to be mercenary, and if little will suffice, I shall not think of asking for more. Hitherto I can, through grace, accommodate the saying of the Apostle to my own conduct 'We seek not yours, but you.' Having no fortune of my own, makes it necessary to propose, fourthly, that I may have the disposal of the sacramental alms. My own liberalities cannot be large, hitherto they have been to the very extent of my circumstances, nor do I wish to curtail them by this requisite. In market towns the sick poor are generally numerous, and the alms of the minister accompanying his prayers, do much to remove prejudice and bring them under the word. These are the principal terms of settlement that at present strike me, and if reasonable objection can be made against them, I shall be ingenuous enough to yield to them. Neither in these or any thing else

do I desire to lord it over God's heritage. Should a connexion take place between us, I trust our stipulation will not be that of master and servants, but of a more sacred and fraternal nature. No conditions are so binding as those arising from affection, no bonds so lasting as those made up of the unity of the Spirit. My brethren will do well to remember that a man, and not an angel, is putting himself in their way; a man subject to like passions, surrounded with many and great temptations, a man at best but of very slender gifts, and of a small degree of grace, who needs their pity and prayers; and promises not to seek for dominion over their faith, but to strive in the strength of divine grace, to be the helper of their joy. Should I have the opportunity to approve myself what I profess, it will be but prudent in me to remember the people are in some instances a counterpart of myself, and will require the exercise of those graces which are opposite to the dictates and inclinations of our corrupt nature. If the providence of God should bring us together, and by the uniting of our affections and the tenderness of our spirits towards each other, we should be continued together any time on earth, I trust it will be the matter of our everlasting rejoicing in heaven. With my kind respects to your family, and christian love to all whom these may concern, I remain, dear sir, &c."

To the Church under his care at Painswick, respecting an assistant.

"My dear brethren,—It was my intention long since, to have acknowledged the address communicated to me by Messrs. Wood and Horlick.—I feel myself much obliged for the acceptance you, and others whose names are not added to the address, have given to the sincere, though feeble services I have rendered you by the ministry of the word, and by other endeavours I have exerted for the cause of Christ in this neighbourhood, for full seventeen years.—I am, blessed be God, in full mental capacity for the continuance of my labours, though bodily strength certainly declines.—As the result, I bend under the weight of a third service on the Lord's day.—This is a service by no means necessary for the pious part of the congregation.—I at first established and have continued it for the benefit of our neighbours, supposing if they are inclined to hear, God may bless the word to them. However desirable assistance may have been, I could not encourage the hope of it, not having it in my power to make the necessary compensation hitherto. Providence having been graciously pleased to throw the property of my late friend and relative into my hands, I thought it necessary from the acknowledgment I have received for my labours, to make it practical to have an assistant, and when the expenses of our building are completely defrayed, to support him from my salary.—My valued friends Messrs. —— called my attention to ——. I am informed his service does not meet with approbation sufficient to admit of a hope that he may constantly take part in the ministry with me.—I shall not think of imposing him upon you. As soon as I conveniently can, I shall resign him, and in the mean while as God shall enable me, will persevere in my ministry as usual, not doubting but when I fail, God will provide for you.

In the mean while I beg an interest in your prayers, and exhort you to pray that in due time the great Head of the church may meet our wishes, if he see it fit to send me help, or that if either by reason of weakness I should be laid aside, or be removed to my rest, the man after his own heart may be the overseer of you.—The fragment of my days and strength, shall, in the strength of divine grace, be as much as ever devoted to your best interest.—My study shall be the harmony, the prosperity, the comfort and improvement of the church and congregation.—I would wish to be as an affectionate father among his children, seeking not yours, but you, and if any think my conduct should be contrary to this protestation, on its being pointed out, I will endeavour to correct it. May we all remember that we are professedly the followers of Jesus—he was meek and lowly in heart, and among his disciples as one that served; thus by copying after him, may we be possessed of humbleness of mind, of charity, which is the bond of perfectness, and in every respect walk worthy of the vocation wherewith we are called, and adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things.—I exceedingly lament the opposite temper, spirit, and conduct which is among us, and am so far from thinking myself free from blame, that I bewail my imperfections before God, and am sorry that in any instance I have given offence.—But he who knoweth the heart, can discriminate between infirmity that mixes with a small measure of zeal for his glory, and wilful sin; between that weakness of nature that clogs the wheels of the soul, and that sluggishness which is indulged without regard to divine honour. That we may walk in love, and live in the mutual exercise of grace one towards another, and altogether glorify God in our bodies and spirits which are his, is, and shall be, the prayer of, my dear brethren, yours, affectionately, in our dear Lord Jesus.

"*Hill Farm, Oct.* 19, 1805."

To the same, when confined by his fracture.

"My dear people,—My present affliction has given me full proof of that concern

of which I never harboured a doubt, namely, your affection for me; and he who knoweth all things, knoweth that I have an equal share for you. We can mutually bear our testimony to the reciprocal attachment between the shepherd voluntarily chosen, and the flock, the care of which is freely accepted. How different is such a connexion from that of a minister performing his duty officially only, and a people who are habituated only to a frigid service. My present confinement gives me opportunity to review my past life and labours among you, with neither of which I am so fully satisfied, as to be entirely quieted from the censure of my own heart. Indeed I have always been sensible that you had a claim upon me, for the answering of which, I have wanted capacity, rather than inclination. I am now, by the providence of God, set aside from service, and am taught by experience to sympathise with, and pray for those who are the subjects of affliction: but I believe through your prayers and the supply of the spirit of Christ, that which is an apparent evil, will work together for good. It is instructive to us all, and is a sermon, which, if properly improved, is as efficacious as any that could be preached from the pulpit.

"I set out from the house of our venerable dying friend with cautious steps, after having prayed that we might all be prepared for what God has prepared for us; and if caution, independent of God had been sufficient, I had not fallen. We need continually to recollect that address once made by an eminent saint, in these words, 'Hold thou me up and I shall be safe.'

"There is a material difference between falling through what is called accident, and falling by sin; from the former we are not always secure, from the latter we may be—through him, who is able to keep us. He does keep the feet of the saints, and his grace is sufficient for all who apply to him for it. A disaster tending to break the bones of any of our members, is nothing, compared with the wound a soul receives by a fall into sin. In the former case, experience teaches me there is peace and quietness, which throbbing pain, and the uneasiness of a fixed unusual posture for many days, cannot interrupt; in the latter is an experience, that I pray God we may all be strangers to—of doubt and disquietude, fear and trembling; a heavy scourge, and hard to be borne; and which, if given up to hardness of heart, does but prepare us for that awful state, where there remaineth no more sacrifice for sin.

"We distinguish between the backslider who falls to rise, who returns unto the Lord and is healed; and the backslider in heart, who is filled with his own ways. But if we love him who loved us, who gave himself a sacrifice for us, we should abhor the idea of departing from him, and of causing his Holy Spirit to depart from us. Connected with this disposition there is a duty inculcated upon us. It is watchfulness and prayer; of these consist the Christian's intrenchment, these are the lines our enemy cannot break; be the person who uses them ever so weak, he will be sure to stand; be the person who neglects them, ever so strong in himself, ever so judiciously taught, or ever so extensive in his knowledge, he is liable to fall.—Honour God in all the means of his appointment. Be attentive to social prayer; let the time when most suitable, and the place where it may be most convenient to be carried on, and the length of the exercise be studied for general advantage. Do not let family worship and the catechising of children be neglected. Be stated and regular in your attendance upon the word. In this latter duty three things are to be regarded, the information of the judgment, the raising the soul to a state of communion with God, and unimpeached morality. The latter is by the apostle Peter, denominated 'All holy conversation.' In this perhaps, we are too deficient, and therefore subject ourselves to mutual reflection, and prevent gainsayers from receiving the force of the word, and joining in our communion. I wish my own ministry, as long as I am continued among you, may have a most blessed effect, that the world may have no evil thing to say of you; and during the time of the suspension of my ministry, it shall be my earnest prayer, that the occasional services which may be afforded us, may be alike effectual. Our beloved brother Mr. Bishop, of Gloucester, has most kindly engaged to arrange our supplies, and as they will consist of the whole association, I should hope no one will consider himself under a necessity to wander from home. All are not alike steady in their attendance, yet the exception is very inconsiderable.

"I need not commend myself to your prayers: I have to thank you already for my interest in them. Cease not to pray that I may be restored to you again if it be the will of God; and that it may be found that my affliction, is eventually, your consolation. It is but a little while at longest I can expect to be with you: as long as it may be, O! let it prove for 'your furtherance and joy of faith;' 'Only let your conversation be, as becometh the gospel of Christ, that whether I come to see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs; that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind, striving together for the faith of the gospel.' For that which is inconsistent with the pure principles referred to by the apostle, as the faith of the gospel, will bewilder our judgment, invalidate the precious Saviour in our esteem, and raise in us a self-importance, which the Lord approveth not; it will lead us into the mistake of substituting tinsel for gold, and of placing unallowed merit in morality. I inculcate morality upon

you, with all my powers, but then it is as the fruit of a tree made good. The morality I would largely inculcate, extends to every relation, and to every avocation of life, that the enemies to the truth of the gospel may have no evil thing to say of you, but otherwise they may see you have your fruit out of holiness, as you expect the end will be everlasting life. Under the influence of grace that enables you so to live and act, you will be at an entire distance from the spirit of the age; its vanities will not be able to fasten upon you in a way of attraction, you will keep yourself unspotted from the world, find true joys in religion, and your time will be fully occupied between its duties and the avocations of life. You will not withdraw from society, nor insult it by moroseness. You will observe due decorum, be courteous towards all men, and by supporting the consistency of your character, you will be well understood by men who cannot dive into your views, yet will sooner or later admire in you, what they themselves cannot immediately drop into: by your good conversation which they shall behold, they may be awakened and won, and perceiving that God is with us of a truth, the day of their visitation may be drawn on, in which they also may glorify God. But whither am I going? Without prudent caution into the length of a sermon, and far exceeding the limits of a letter. I hope again to address you by an amanuensis, till I be restored to see you face to face, in the re-assumption of my pulpit exercises. Till then, and for ever, I am, your faithful and affectionate minister, and friend in the bonds of the everlasting gospel."

To the same.

"My ever dear, and highly beloved people,—Nearly a week has elapsed since my address to you, in which time I am brought under increasing obligation to love you, and to thank you for the early attention you have manifested to my necessities, which your tender care led you to conceive would be considerable by the affliction I am exercised with. It would be sinful secrecy that would prevent me now from saying, I have all things and abound. The supply of my wants is ample, while you continue in prayer for me that I may be restored unto you with an increase of spirituality and zeal; and that I may adopt the most effectual methods to be communicative while I receive your communications, is a part of my prayers which I offer frequently upon the bed, to which I apprehend I must submit to be long confined. My joy in part is, that I have a list amply filled of brethren, who make their free-will offerings to serve you in the ministry till I am restored unto you again. You may disarm yourselves of suspicion that any thing will be advanced by them but the pure unadulterated gospel of Christ—may every sermon be impressed upon your souls, and while faith and practice are inculcated upon you, may you unanimously say, All that the Lord speaketh unto us by his servants, that, in the strength of his grace, will we do. If I say, take heed how you hear, it is to exhort you not to be hearers only, but doers of the word. Pray to the Father of Lights that he may make you the children of the light and of the day; that under the guidance of his Holy Spirit you may be led fully and deeply into the truth as it is in Jesus, and that you may support your characters by walking as the sons of God, unreproveable and unrebukeable in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation. You will then live under the banner of his fatherly protection, who, though he may not suffer you to escape affliction, will support you under it, at whatever time it is his pleasure you should be exercised thereby; and make the bitters of your cup subservient to the health of your souls, and preparatory of eternal glory.—Determine by divine grace to be nothing short of what you should be; answer to the character of Israelites indeed, in whom there is no guile—be continual in your application to the precious Saviour, from whose fulness you may always be supplied with grace; and in virtue of his communications you may make your boast—'In the Lord have I righteousness and strength.' Observe all his ordinances, and come into that contact with each other, that will dispose you to form a communion which will distinguish you as members of the church, as well as general hearers of the word. How glad shall I be to see you all disposed to join yourselves to the Lord, and to be found at that sacred table where there is meat to be received, the world knows nothing of. I am more and more impressed with a conviction that the ordinance of the sacred supper is neglected by many of you, who, I am persuaded have a title to it, through him who receiveth sinners upon the terms of free grace, and inviteth them to come without money and without price. I hope our brethren who constitute an organized church in this place, will not make the door of admission narrower than that which is referred to in this language, 'Behold I have set before you an open door.' It is sad that such a door should remain open, and so few be disposed to enter. But I find I must desist.

"That God's blessing may be upon all our attempts wherein his glory is concerned, that all our comforts and all our crosses may be alike sanctified, that we whose union is so close, and who meet together for public worship upon earth, may at last meet in glory, is the prayer of, my dear friends, &c."

To H—— E——s, Esq.

"Honoured and very dear sir,—Yesterday I had the pleasure of dear Mrs. E—— for an auditor. I sent one of my pupils for her on a double horse, and, with Mrs. Winter, escorted her home in the evening, to your most pleasant and comfortable mansion, where we have each laid down in peace and slept and risen again, because the Lord has made us dwell in safety. I hope your journey has been pleasant and prosperous, and that with a mind staid upon God, you are waiting the providential opportunity to return, determined to be happy. Should not the toil be entirely unloosed at once, let the idea that it will be one day or another, keep you patient; and though litigation may be settled with loss, let the consideration that it is but a partial loss, reconcile your mind to it. Revolve in your own mind the comforts remaining, and give to God the sacrifice of praise. I know I am but expressing your own sentiment, when I say your obligations to God are not the less because your property is paternal. By reflection and expression of gratitude, the mind may be advanced to an amazing pitch, and without some effort of this nature, we may possess the Indies without enjoying a mite of our possession. If to so valuable and dear friend as Mr. E——s, I mention any thing of my own frame and conduct, it is solely with a view to set him upon the same successful expedient of acquiring present tranquillity of mind. I would look not at what I want, but at what I have. I would reflect not how great are my trials in life, but how much greater than they are, they might be. I have but a little while to be here, and why should I not enjoy myself on my journey? If the way is rugged the end will compensate; and keeping it in view, I reckon the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed. These I frankly acknowledge, not from ostentation, or as conceiving they are in me a merit, or that by my own power I thus act, but to emplify what advantage you in your easy circumstances may live under. Next to God and Christ, love yourself, nourish and cherish your own flesh, by which I mean, make every rational and scriptural exertion to enjoy what God has graciously given you; and in order to this, first study the peace of your mind, and then the most probable means to restore and preserve the health of your body. In matters of religion use your judgment, and reduce it to practice. Rely upon the Saviour for pardon, look to him for peace, and honour his commands and appointments in evidence that you love him. Pray for grace and strength, and he will make you equal to all that exertion which is expected from the man and the Christian. See, dear sir, how soon I catch at your permission to drop you a line, and by my didactical strain, what liberty I take from it. I know you will pardon my freedom, and accept my intention as a pepper-corn of gratitude for the innumerable instances of your long and steady friendship, which as I most highly esteem for its own sake, rather than for the repeated pledges of it, I hope I shall never by imprudence, as I am sure I shall never with intention, forfeit. Mrs. E—— desires that my pen may communicate her kindest love, and is pleased to require me to add, she wishes you joy of your correspondence.—I am, &c."

To Mrs. B——r.

"My dear madam,—I have not forgotten you, though I have not before communicated to you the pleasure I feel on hearing of the mercy you obtained by a safe birth. As for this blessing I bore you on my heart in prayer, so your deliverance has excited my warmest praise. I hope continual mercy attends you, and that you are kept in the delightful exercise of thanksgiving, stimulated by increasing favours peculiar to your situation. I shall be thankful when I have an opportunity given me to magnify the Lord, together with you. At present I am detained from home to acquire all I can for the purpose of preventing debt being contracted, or of making it as light as possible. Till lately I have heard nothing from our committee, but I find my disappointment has been partly owing to my frequent and uncertain movements. I compare myself to a man worn out with repeated shocks of electricity, and therefore would avoid a future one if he could. But if I add to the sum already acquired, I must undergo shock upon shock yet. My journies, though trying from being obliged to appear before strangers as a mendicant, have been attended with many mercies. I have been providentially directed unto many quarters where friendship has displayed itself; and it has been thought a kind Providence that has given occasion to an interview hardly expected on this side the grave. I have seen the grace of God in many of the churches of the saints, and have been made glad by the evidence that God has not left his people destitute of his mercy and truth. In our quarter I trust these divine properties are conspicuous. May you have abundant proof of the faithfulness of God, to the promises upon which you are caused to hope. Your new relation gives a turn to your attention, and a fresh channel is now open for your affections to flow in. May the dear infant graciously given to you be continued, and parental care be attended with divine blessing from God, that you may rear into maturity the tender plant, and have your present care rewarded

with future comfort. Attention to the dear child will not divert you from the Father of your mercies. You are now as ever, I am persuaded, open to divine communication, and are frequently turning to heaven and eternal glory, as to the ultimate of all enjoyments. When providentially detained from those public ordinances, which have been and are your delight, by the attention your infant charge may claim, may the sacred Scriptures open to you in your retirement, and through them, as the grand medium of conveyance, may the living water flow to your refreshment. With Jesus is an infinite source, and the streams run from him in all directions, that they may follow after, and meet the subjects of his love in whatever situation the providence of God may place them. When he by his Spirit excites a thirst in our souls, by that same Spirit he will dispose us to look for that supply he only has to impart, and we shall experience that with him is the fountain of life. If we abide by him, we shall be sure to be well supplied, but if we leave him for cisterns, disappointment will be the consequence. Wherever I go I find they are the happiest, who make much of their Saviour. He honours the confidence of his people, and whatever he promises he will give; none ever trusted in him and were disappointed.—On Monday evening I had a short interview with Mrs. W—— from whom I learned the state of your family. I hope all the afflictions with which it may be exercised will prove blessings. I supposed Mrs. B——'s health had acquired stability, and was surprised to hear that it had been so seriously attacked again. Mr. B—— I find is hardly strong enough for a soldier. I hope he never will be called to take the field. If an invalid, he had better consult his constitution, than stand upon a point of honour; and nurse himself, rather than hazard himself to weathers which might endanger a life too valuable to be sacrificed by neglect. I hope he will accept my warmest salutations, and that he will consider himself a sharer with you in the congratulation, which I tender on the birth and continuance of the dear child; and if my prayers have efficacy enough to prevail, he with you will have days long upon earth, and at the end of them an abundant entrance ministered into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Thither two valuable ministers have gained admission, whose usefulness I supposed might have been continued for years to come. I expect Mr. Newton will soon be on the list of the glorified: I had a most satisfactory interview with him yesterday morning. I wish I could give his conversation, his family exposition, and prayer, upon paper; but I must reserve the recital for our meeting, if God permit. Accept in the mean while, these incoherent lines as they are directed, with a design to assure you, that I am, dear madam, yours, &c. *London, Nov.* 23, 1803."

"I have opened my letter on purpose to beg you to present my best respects to Mr. B—— B——. I think of him often. I detained this letter the longer in hope of meeting with a frank. I cannot bear to put my friends to the expense of postage, if it be possible to avoid it; but an unwillingness to appear to neglect when I really do not intend it, makes me send this through the common medium.

To Mr. W——n.

"My ever and very dear sir,—Having at an early hour consecrated myself unto God, a part of that time which he has graciously continued unto me, I dedicate in attention to you. In the course of my long absence you have often been in my thoughts, nor have you been excluded from my prayers. I am happy in the occasion now given me to address you, and wish any thing that may drop from my pen may be refreshing to you. I have attended to the prime object of your letter, and applied to a person who I think, if he can be procured, would answer Mr. J—'s description. In a day or two I shall know his mind. It is probable, while I am throwing a few lines together, you are tossing upon the sea; but I trust it is under the protection of Him who gives the waves their fury, who agitates the sea when it roars and is tempestuous, and who has power at any time to reduce into a calm, and make its surface as smooth as a looking-glass. He has not only power over the sea to control it, but also over the passions and principles of wicked and unreasonable men, of which the raging waves are a true emblem. We have, as a people, to do with such, and whether they may have power to act against us at all, or with what degree of success, is uncertain. Numbers are interceding with heaven, and pleading, 'Spare thy people, O Lord.'—May he in answer to prayer, raise a bulwark consisting of stronger materials than earth can produce, and then all the precautions we may take will be serviceable and successful; but if salvation be not of the Lord, vain is the wisdom, the foresight, and the help of man. Our discouragement arises from our national sins, which may deservedly cause the Lord's ear to be heavy that it will not hear, and should it be the case that the overflowing scourge should pass through the land, we who, through grace, are not partakers of her evil deeds, shall find support under the judgments which may be abroad in the earth, and shall be safe in those chambers which our covenant God may provide for his people. We must not expect our exemption from, but we may expect supports in trouble. An interest in his lovingkindness will secure to us the

interposition of his providential goodness on our behalf. What his word records relative to this point, may you, my dear sir, have an enlarged and continual experience of, and thus have authority to say to all around you, 'O taste and see that the Lord is good, blessed is the man that trusteth in him.' If I call your attention to myself, I must say, with respect to the business I have in hand, I have been wonderfully led. I did not know for some time before I set out, what course to take; but I found my mind calm while my prospects were clouded. I was preparing for another journey at the instant that a letter foreign to my business, required me to come to London, and I scarcely entered upon my application, when I was pressed into the eastern part of the kingdom. In different places my ministry has met with a kind reception, and my applications, which, as I expected would be the case, though they have clashed with many others, have not been repulsed. Particular sums are small, but in the aggregate they amount to more than ——, which I would fain bring to —— before I return, nor need I fear of success; but I find myself very inadequate to the fatigue of soliciting from house to house, and the damp and rainy weather has a very serious effect upon my frame. It brings spasms in my stomach and limbs, and I find precautions necessary, lest I lay myself up. The mercies attendant on this journey have been innumerable; but they have not exempted me from a considerable degree of self-denial. There is no possibility of advancing in the Christian ministry, and of performing the several duties connected with it, without it, especially in that department of the church where I am in providence fixed. Mine through life has been up-hill work, and the whisper in my ear has been, 'Do all things without murmuring.'

"I would copy the obedience of Christ, of whom it is significantly remarked, that 'He pleased not himself,' and therefore when required, would give up the luxury of retirement to mix with the crowd, and those improvements which I am coveting after, that I may impart from the inconsiderable stock of knowledge God has graciously given to me. I feel mortified in being the beggar, and my pride is often humbled by unbecoming repulse, and by the ungracious manner in which some grant the request of my lips. But as in this way I am, *pro tempore*, called to glorify God, I yield to the mortification, and contrast to it the suavity with which my dear Mr. W——n, and a few others who are kindred souls, give treble consequence to their benevolence. It is not the minister's lot only to be mortified. You, my dear sir, have the bitter ingredient of mortification in the cup of life. A part of it, I am persuaded, consists in your being obliged to leave your consecrated and tranquil home to mix with the different tempers of the passengers in a vessel. Mix I should not say. It is one thing to accommodate ourselves to company we cannot avoid, and to pass the ceremony of civility, another to unite. Light and darkness are as distinct in the spiritual as in the natural world; and the question what fellowship hath the former with the latter, amounts to a strong negation, none at all. Blessed be God that you are the child of the light and of the day. I need not say walk as the child of the light. May your steps be exactly followed by those who profess to be in the same communion, and never deviate in their conformity to you, in the vessel, in the dwelling, in the counting-house, and in the church; then they will prove that they are a part of the remnant which is according to the election of grace, and such of them as are wise and discreet ministers will never make that a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence which God puts in the way of his people, as a prevention against boasting, and as an incentive to give all the glory of their salvation to him. Such a minister I hope the vacant pulpit at S—— M—— will one day be filled with. Excuse, my very dear sir, the paper and the imperfection, both of the writing and of the subject. My prayers will ever be offered up for you. My warmest wishes attend you for the success of your voyage. My heart's desire is, that I may see you safe in Stroud, and that, by the grasp of my hand, as well as by the strokes of my pen, I may be permitted to express myself, yours, affectionately, &c.

"*No.* 30, *Gracechurch-street, London. Nov.* 30, 1803."

To Mrs. H—gs.

"My dear bereaved friend,—I cannot say how sorry I am for your very great loss, and for the dear children who share with you in it. It seems to me now as though the stay of my friendship is by this providence broke in Bristol, and though it is an event common to man, and what I have been very familiar with, yet every fresh instance awakens surprise, and for a while swallows up a recollection of what is past. I was in hope of receiving better news, though I feared that which I yesterday received would come. On Sabbath day I said it was probable we should have Mr. H—— with us for change of air. It is otherwise ordered, and permit me to say, well ordered, by him who can do nothing wrong. The air is changed, and a blessed exchange it is to him who is gone to a region where the inhabitants have no sickness to endanger them, and no maladies to complain of. The nerves are braced to their proper tone, and all is well, eternally well. Do not you, my dear friend, repine at the providence, but trust the promise of which, till now, you

were not the subject. You who were a few days since the wife of youth, are now a woman forsaken and grieved in spirit; but comfort will take place of grief after nature has had her full vent, if you can but turn to the widow's God and receive the Lord of Hosts, the Holy One of Israel, the God of the whole earth, in the near relation in which he condescends to describe himself in the fifty-fourth chapter of Isaiah. To prevent your fear and inspire your confidence, treasure up in your mind a recollection of the divine description, 'A Father of the fatherless, and a Judge of the widow is God in his holy habitation,' who amidst the difficulties and the sorrows and dangers with which life is attended, preserveth the fatherless and the widow, and relieveth them out of every distress. You are left in merciful, though not in affluent circumstances. May it please God to spare your good and kind father to you, till you are capable of acting more independent of aid than you can just at present. Be the widow indeed, trust in God, and continue in prayer night and day. Let a proper attention be paid to the education of the dear children, and let it be exact and solid so far as it goes, rather than so extensive and profuse as to spoil them for an early admission into active life, and to unfit them for the ordinary duties of it. You may receive general advice from your friends upon this head, as well upon what respects yourself, but Providence will unfold his own purposes. While you lie in a dependence upon the oar, waiting for his commission, he will notice you according to the appointed time.—Whatever difficulties there are before us there are none before God; and therefore in a way and manner that never could be thought of, he has reared up into, and carried through life, thousands and thousands, whose afflictions have far exceeded yours. Let us with all the attention we pay to the duties incumbent upon us, prepare for our own dismission; we are soon to follow those who have preceded, perhaps very soon. O that we may live in the habitual exercise of grace, and being found in Jesus Christ, may have nothing to do but to yield up ourselves when the summons shall be sent for us. Our attachments to this mortal state are loosened by our friends being removed before us. Their continuance is not so essential to us as we are apt to imagine, and therefore do not let us grudge them their escape. But with a becoming resignation yield to the sovereignty of the divine conduct, and be thankful for the satisfactory evidence we receive from their expiring breath, that they had firm footing for their feet when earth receded from them. I am thankful for my dear friend, that it was the case with him. I hope that you, from a reflection upon this instance of the Lord's indulgence to him, are freely resigning him, and that living upon the promise to which we have reference, and prepared for all future providences, you will be a follower of him, and all who through faith and patience are numbered with the saints in light. Mrs. W—— is, with me, much affected with the news, and concerned for it; she unites in tender sympathetic affection. If a journey hither be practicable, and it would conduce to the refreshment of your spirits, we should be exceedingly glad to see you. Let us hear in some little time how you do. Our love to Mrs. H—— if she is capable of receiving it. It may be well that her feelings upon this occasion are capable of diversion. I am pleased to hear the dear children have so much sensibility. I hope you will have them under command, and receive uninterrupted expressions of endearing duty from them. Though not without our complaints, we have reason to be thankful it is so well with us. But we feel our mortality, and trust we are preparing for our immortality. I have not wrote to Mrs. —— yet, but I think I shall take the advantage of this providence, as it will furnish me with serious matter. I beg to be remembered kindly to Mr. S—— and Mrs. H—— and the young gentleman, and remain, my dear bereaved friend, your much affected, &c.

"*Painswick, July* 13, 1792."

To J. L———e, Esq.

"My very dear sir,—Had it been the case that before the summer had closed we had been favoured with your company, I should have numbered it with the blessings of the year. I have blessings in abundance for which to be thankful, yet not unconnected with trials which have chequered them; yet of these would I not complain; they are blessings, though in their present form, nature recoils at them. The great cause of complaint is in myself. I cannot do the things that I would. Barrenness restrains ideas; and when they rise, the poverty of them makes me groan. I am obliged to labour hard for a little, and am often busy in doing nothing. The occurrences of the day engross my time, and break in upon my plans, so that I am always behind hand in what I propose. How must this appear to you, who amidst your important avocations and severer studies, can find leisure and strength for the study of divinity, and can produce meditations for length and depth of thought such as I am favoured with? I hope to have more in addition to those I have already, as your leisure will allow of my being gratified. May heavenly influence rest upon your soul, and diffuse itself by your pen to him who dearly loves you. I hope Mrs. L—— is in health, and that when I am favoured by hearing from you again, I shall be informed that the dear children are in

a thriving state. They have entered life at a very eventful time. They will, if spared, review the history of the present period, be witnesses to some of the wonders with which it is pregnant, and I trust, partakers of that grace which will more generally then prevail. The darkness of the night connects with the dawn of the morning; so do dark providences with those bright things, after which the promises raise our expectation. Why they should come with so slow a process, be delayed to so distant a period, and be preceded with such desolations as perhaps we are to share in, is an inquiry only to be resolved by a reference to the divine sovereignty, and we must therefore conclude it is good and right. Upon this consideration we acquiesce in the providences which more directly respect ourselves and our immediate connexions, and endeavour to console our afflicted friends, whom we know to be the subjects of divine grace, by referring them to heaven under their severe trials. In that blessed state, where the government is perpetual and the king everlasting, sin being for ever excluded, no pride, animosity, or any thing productive of strife, can corrupt, irritate and disconcert the union and happiness of its inhabitants. Among them we shall stand in our lot. What is allotted to us here, is patiently and submissively to be borne, I had almost said cheerfully; but as no chastening, which is but another word for affliction, seemeth for the present to be joyous, it is not to be supposed that a bright face can unite with an afflicted mind. Sometimes the thoughts and the evidences of heaven are overpowering to our sorrow, like a third or fourth quantity of sweet, acting against a single quantity of bitter. Nor would this rarely be the case, if we were more in communion with God, and had our conversation in heaven, and we were from thence looking for the coming of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. Lest I should seem to make a text in the Hebrews clash with a text in the Romans, I would observe, that there is a difference between an affliction entailed by our sins, and one that ariseth from the opposition of men to the work of God, or the sufferings of the Christian for righteousness sake. A martyr's suffering when the cause has been good, has had more than a fourth or a tenth of pleasure acting against pain, and from such instances we see how God can act upon us, to make us at least equal to whatsoever he calls us to bear. My dear friend might have supposed by the strain of my writing that I am under a particular exercise, had I not prevented the thought in the beginning of the letter. But no; by bending to the times they are not yet too hard for us, though universal experience proves that the expense of housekeeping is doubled since I became housekeeper. The distresses of the poor are not so easily relieved, though in consequence of the advanced price upon all the articles of life, their distresses are very considerably increased. The cause of the exorbitant prices of provision is matter of speculation as yet unexplored. Perhaps the lightness of the last crop of wheat and barley accounts in part for the high rate at which these are purchased; and during the drought we could admit of the reason for butter and cheese being advanced. But how mercifully did a fortnight's rain give verdure to the creation and grass to the cattle, which has continued till now so plentiful that it is a matter for admiration. Why then these commodities should now be so highly rated must be conceived of from some other cause than the parsimony of nature. Whatever it be of a secondary nature, it is primarily from the Lord. It is a twig in that rod which is made to scourge, though we are scourged less than our iniquities deserve. May repentance prevent the blow from being repeated with greater force; and may it not only be repentance productive of reform, but may it be repentance unto life. I can only add my own and Mrs. W——'s kind salutations to dear Mrs. L——, and that I am, &c.

"*Painswick, October* 26, 1800"

To the same.

"My very dear sir,—I am generally unfortunate in not acknowledging your obliging communications so punctually as I ought, and on this account stand reprovable, though your kindness withholds the reproof. I have had no disinclination to embrace your invitation to Wem, on the contrary my heart tends towards you, but I have been prevented hitherto, and till now have not been able to fix the time of my journey. A raging malignant fever has visited our neighbourhood, and seized numbers of the dear people with whom I stand connected. It has held long, and still continues, and by the visits my pastoral office obliges me to make, I am in deaths oft. With others, a most valuable woman has claimed my attention, a sufferer of an uncommon description for fifteen years, who, about six weeks since, evidently entered upon her last stage, and I was desirous to continue my feeble services to her till she got beyond my reach. That became the case last Saturday morning. On Lord's-day evening I preach her funeral sermon. The following Sabbath is our ordinance day, and on the Monday, with divine permission, I shall advance to Gloucester in my way to Wem, making Kidderminster of necessity, and Birmingham by choice, in my road.——What would I bring with me if I could of the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, instead of which, I shall bring a heavy, dull, empty mind, and a body that is far from being friendly to its improvement. I shall come

with great expectation of being edified and comforted by my dear friends, dear Mr. and Mrs. L——e and the circle connected with them. And though it has not been in my power to embrace their invitation while the country scenes are most engaging, what may fail without, by the advance of the autumn and the early closing of the days, will be amply compensated by their society within doors, the retirement of the chamber, and the silent instructers with which they abound. I pray that what I may bring into the pulpit may be clothed with divine energy, that the creature's deficiency may be supplied with the fulness of God, and that divine power may be made manifest in his weakness. I see it a great indulgence that I have been at liberty this fine spring and summer, though I cannot walk much or far at a time, and by the exertion I am obliged to make, I am sensible of much fatigue. The use of the pen has the like effect; but I must act under the influence of self-denial, that I may discharge in the best manner I can, the duties I owe God and my connexions.—I would rather have our dear friend ——'s love than his lash, because I dearly love him, and if I could, would preserve him from being lashed; but he sometimes exposes himself to the whip by the liberty he takes, a return of which he cannot well bear. How desirable is an admission into the general assembly and church of the first born, consisting of the spirits of the just made perfect, when in consequence of their perfection, their views are exactly right. Could we but live here in the exercise of Christian charity and forbearance, we might differ without being different as to what is essential to Christianity. Uniformity is not necessary to union, except we consider it in reference to Christ. In sentiment and external order it is impossible. In our land, where the divisions of profession are so various, a fine opportunity is afforded for the exercise of charity. But it is hard to attain that grace; whereas depravity, as it appears in our dissentions, is common to our nature, and breaks forth upon the smallest occasion offered. Blessed be God for the spirit prevailing in you, my dear sir. May the mind that was in Christ Jesus be in you more and more, till you are as completely as possible changed into his image. Please to present my kindest salutations to dear Mr. L——, Mr. E——, and all who have any recollection of yours, &c.

"*Painswick, August* 27, 1801."

To the same.

We have slipped into a new year, I had almost said, impereeptibly, while my most dear friend's favour of the 24th of November remains unacknowledged, though not unnoticed. Shame upon me! I feel it as I write; but indulged by the liberty you give, I hope these lines, though too long delayed will be acceptable. Strange to tell! When your letter with the copy of Mr. W——'s and the translation of the soliloquy of Musculus came to Painswick, I was in London, from whence I did not return till the beginning of the last month. The call thither was sudden and providential. It respected the business of the good little woman which I mentioned to you when at Wem. The critical moment was the moment of divine interposition; and by the benevolence of a neighbour, and the vigorous exertion of Mr. P——t, the decent subsistence of about fourscore pounds *per annum* is rescued from Chancery. This occurrence detained me four weeks in the metropolis, where I preached in different congregations, among which the Tabernacle and Surrey chapel are to be mentioned. I had as much pleasure as I usually have in preaching; I have not wings to soar high. I had great pleasure in hearing several excellent ministers, within and without the establishment, and am delighted by the evident proof that a great spirit of hearing prevails. It is supposed by some that the spirit of religion is not so apparent as formerly. I would hope this is a mistake. There may be leaves without fruit, but there cannot be fruit without leaves; and I think the inference to be drawn from a number of hearers is natural, that some good is doing, though it may not be in proportion to appearance. The circle I moved in, gave me pleasure. I found the friends who formed it such as I could wish. Mr. P——t is not diverted from the gospel by the study of the civil law, but like my dear Zenas, finds his delight in the law of the Lord, and has his soul absorbed in the gospel of Christ, though he has not stepped into a pulpit to proclaim it.—How great a debtor am I to you! I do not forget that I am very much dear Mrs. L——'s debtor also. I revolve in my mind the late visit, and the comfort it was attended with. Not a day, I believe, passes without the thought of you and yours. I hope your late disappointment has left no unpleasant effect upon Mrs. L——, but that her constitution gets confirmed. May many years be appointed for your existence together, and your mutual happiness; and though an addition in course be not given to your offspring, may the dear little creatures you have, flourish to a long maturity, and reward the parental cares by a return of affection! Did you go to Ireland? Or did the sudden introduction of peace prevent your design from taking effect! I hope it will prove a permanent peace, and that we shall have no damp brought upon our joy. We have a more important peace in which we are so interested, that were it not made by the blood of the Cross, we must have been

eternally miserable: but being made sure and ratified, our eternal happiness follows of consequence. The vicissitudes which occur among individuals and nations, though they may affect us as men, cannot hurt us eventually. Yet a little while and we shall be carried above all that is earthly; and while on earth, amidst all the convulsions common to this world, we shall be preserved from evil, or be supported under whatever degree of it the Lord may see fit to befall us. Mrs. W—— joins in affectionate wishes, that blessings in an abundance may be your portion this year. I feel a desire to express more than I am able. I cannot tell you how much I am, &c.

"*Painswick, Jan.* 9, 1802."

To Mr. P——e.

"My dear friend,—Your claim upon my promise is a very just one. I am not mortified that you have it to present me with, but pleased that you hold me worth your notice. Never think hard of me because I am not exact in writing, since I am ready to prove my warm attachment when I can devote the hour to you. I observe your partiality for retirement, and am thankful for the little, and it is but little I have of it. Though the situation I inhabit is favourable to it, I cannot always use it to advantage. The duties of the pulpit require much more and closer meditation than I can indulge; and, owing to the little services I am called to attend to, on the behalf of one and another, a great deal of time is employed more like a man in business, than like a student in divinity, or as a person who would indulge literary pursuits. It is a mercy to be in God's way, and though it be not pleasant to have our inclination thwarted, in the end it will turn out better to us than living to ourselves. There is literary lust, as well as the lust of the flesh; and as unhallowed passion and pride usually accompany each other; so vanity and letters are too closely connected, and the man of general learning too frequently forgets, that if he had not been exempted from manual labour, and had diligently applied the mind to his favourite object, he would have gaped with wonder at that, which, by the display of, he makes others gape. You are evidently called to be the man of business, but whether it be the business of the care-worn metropolis, or that which may be negotiated among the sweet scenes of Stroudwater, is impossible for me to judge. It is the mercy of thousands, and of yourself in the number, that communion with God is not incompatible with business. Let not the latter be carried to the unnecessary extreme, and the former will comport with it. The world is the great stage upon which, not the drama, but the reality of life is exhibited; each man is a character, and has his part once to perform, and having performed it, he makes his exit to be seen no more. Think of this, my dear friend, and perform your part well. Neither you, nor I, have had our part to choose, it is wisely allotted to us, and if we look to him who has appointed us to stand in our lot, his grace will be sufficient for us. Called to advance a little before you, most probably I shall withdraw a little sooner. You are on your advance, and will have your removal; attend to the heavenly Prompter and you will make no material mistake, no, not in the education of your children. Why are you so anxious upon that head? According to the sphere in which a child is designed to move, should be the limit or extent of his education. Let common and essential parts be learnt well, and leave all the rest. Too highly finished an education to a child who has his bread to labour for, is as prejudicial as a neglected education. You cannot crowd into the years of fourteen, the accomplishments which require application till twenty. Unless you intend that your daughters shall be upon an equality with ladies of the first description, and your sons shall be prepared for a profession, I hope you will be wiser than many parents, who feed vanity and unfit for usefulness, and thereby entail misery and distress upon posterity. Have a special care of their morals, and inculcate the principles and duties of religion with the greatest exactness, and you will lay a good foundation. I wish you had signified whether you succeed in your new department, as to know it will give me pleasure. But the times are bad, and I can hardly indulge hope for many of my friends. The mysterious wheel of Providence is going round, and it will fix politics in their proper posture by and by. Though present appearances are unfavourable, they are in their proper order to effect, and to bring to pass, according as the God of the whole world has purposed and promised. I intend, if I live till fast-day, to engage the attention of my people to the second and third verses of the forty-sixth Psalm. Trouble and perplexity will cease in proportion as we are disposed to be like minded with the Psalmist. I am endeavouring to accommodate circumstances to providences, and through mercy, we are indulged with much peace and tranquillity. When you come into Gloucestershire, we shall be obliged by a sight of you. I wish it had been in my power to have spent more time with you at Hackney, but so wide is the circle of friends in and about London, that it wears me out to attempt to pay due respect to them. I shall not be deficient in my remembrance of you in my best moments. Give me the same advantage, and believe me to be, my dear friend, yours affectionately."

To the same.

"My dear friend,—Your last favour might be supposed to be a stimulus to me. Indeed it is not without its effect, though I never forgot my obligations; to discharge them presently was not in my power. I wish, now I sit down to discharge them, I may be able to pay you large interest. I have an inclination so to do; if I fail, impute it to my poverty. I am abundantly obliged by your communication of the Monthly Magazine, which, for want of time, has been shamefully neglected, and I am sorry I am obliged to add, so superficially scanned over, that numberless articles have escaped me.—Every day brings its particular business, and the week is so swift in its rotation, that I scarcely get revived from the fatigue of one Sabbath before another revolves upon me, and finds me unprepared for its public services. I live a life of perpetual languor, and my eyes hardly ever cease to ache. A reading society crowds books pretty fast upon me, and I can hardly expedite the reading of them fast enough. The Bible demands far more of my attention than I give it, both as a minister, that I should be a scribe well instructed, and as a Christian, that I may know the things which are freely given to me of God. A scanty mind will neither receive nor retain every thing. That must first and principally be attended to, that is of the first importance. My day is far spent; for want of falling early in life into proper hands, the hours are far gone beyond recall, which should have been devoted to improvement; and there are many things which it would be pleasing to be acquainted with, but of which, at my time of life, and in my situation, I must be content to be ignorant, at least to be very superficially acquainted with; especially as I have a young man with me to whose improvement I must be attentive; and this is an additional reason why I cannot indulge pursuits for which I am inclined. It is well to be disposed to be in the will of God; and knowing we are in it, we ought to be satisfied. Pride makes us discontented with little things, and the universal prevalence of pride is the ruin of the whole world. I hope, my dear sir, that by living under the blessing of God, and the influence of his Holy Spirit, you have food for contentment to feed upon, and that meeting with a daily sufficiency for yourself and family, you feel yourself rich. The present are spending, not enriching times. The current where riches flow is partial. It is directed to here and there a great man, very seldom a good man. Any man had better be without riches, unless he conceives of them as coming from God, and that he is accountable for the use and improvement of them. When they are coined by oppression and fraud, and are stained with blood, they will turn to a witness against their possessors in his sight who judgeth righteously, and who will render to every man according to his works. How many are there at this time who are basking in their wealth, but who are nigh unto cursing, whose end is to be burned! A worse evil than poverty will come upon them as an armed man, and they shall not be able to escape. The way to avoid the snare is to use the Gospel properly, to be decided by its declarations, to be guided by its precepts, to believe its promises, and to be so intensely set upon its heavenly objects, as to be detached from earth. A very valuable character, Mr. —— of ——, a sweet singer in that department of God's Israel, who had much to do with life, was on Sabbath day afternoon called from it. He was successful in his endeavours, and has lived just long enough to rear the last of his children. I fear their not partaking of the father's grace, will prevent the property gained by industry, from spending well. This is the principal piece of intelligence I have to communicate, unless I add to it the happy death of Mr. F—— of Frampton, of which you shall have a particular account through the press. I hope these will find you, Mrs. P——, Mrs. B——, and the dear children, well. My best wishes ever attend you, and my prayers often accompany them. Mrs. W—— unites. Here we are in our little cottage, conforming to the times, and waiting for whatever events our good Lord has appointed for us.—I am, &c.

"*Painswick, April* 3, 1799."

To the same.

"My dear sir,—Still I may appear to be deficient in the performance of my promise; but I still have an excuse to plead. My heart is better disposed towards you, than intentionally to withhold the only gratification it is in my power to afford you. The lapse of almost three months, since I left London, makes the account of my journey home unsuitable; it was a journey of some difficulty, but of more mercy. Within a few roods of the Golden Hart, at Stroud, the coach was overset, but I, the only inside passenger, escaped unhurt. I believe my grasping the loop on the upper side, and poising my head with as much caution as possible, prevented a mischievous blow. In all danger, human foresight and caution is vain, but as we are providentially directed to them, with design to our protection. Our dangers are many more than we are aware of, and our obligation to the Lord for our salvation, greater than we can possibly conceive. This being the case, resignation of ourselves to God, confidence in him, and praise rendered to him should be three principal duties, in the discharge of which we should daily live, and while we thus live, we shall not be inatten-

tive to whatever else respects the glory of God, nor fail to exert ourselves for his glory. An attention to this essential duty of Christianity, does not require that we should always be in the act of divine worship. This is impossible. We must wait till we arrive at glory, before we can be thus incessantly employed. Yet are we not to be inattentive to this devotional service while here. We shall find it to our advantage to redeem as much of our time as we can retrieve from the business of life, for this sacred service; and to engage in it, not as an amusement, but as an exercise of a pious nature, by which our communion with God is to be supported. While we have a spark of zeal for God, we should lament the decay of custom, which among the people of our connexion, promotes frequent week-day assemblies, as well as those which are collected on the Sabbath. But is there not reason to suspect that we preserve them rather as means of amusement, than as being concerned in the use of them, to keep up holy intercourse with God? They cannot be detached from private devotion, without losing their efficacy. The recess of the closet prepares for public ordinances, as the advantages of public ordinances are secured and made efficacious, by the exercises of that retirement. But as the tradesman must of necessity engage much of his time to the business of the counting-house, what is he to do? Take God with him—regard equity in his negociations—guard against levity, even where he cannot with propriety introduce religion. Where it would be impertinent to make religion the subject of discourse, a man may be religious. Sanctity of heart will produce sanctity of deportment, which will act against levity and sinful compliance, without disgusting those who are of a contrary part. Ejaculation is a mental act, in the habitual use of which, communion with God may be maintained in the crowd, as well as in the closet, and we can pray without letting any body know we are at prayer. While settling an account, or posting the books, a space may be found to relieve the mind by the indulgence of a spiritual thought, that may be of great use to prevent it from being engrossed by earth; and though the mind being constantly upon the stretch, may feel its burden, it will be prevented by a momentary retreat to spiritual objects, from sinking under it. They that wait upon the Lord for the smallest time shall renew their strength. This, my dear friend has learned by experience, and as your knowledge increases you will become daily confirmed in grace. Your helps are more than your hinderances, many as they may be, and your Helper is always at hand. To him I commend you while I write, as well as at other times, and pray he may endue you with all that fortitude your difficulties and duties may require, and that you may stand every shock with courage, and submit to every disappointment with a persuasion that nothing comes by chance.—Times are yet seriously bad, notwithstanding peace is restored. Whether it be permanent or not, must be left for futurity to determine. If I were to think for myself only, I should be very indifferent about political events, as I am descending into the vale of life, and a few steps farther may carry me beyond all earthly concerns. I feel much which forbids my expectation of becoming a very old man, though appearance misguides the judgment of my friends, who hardly suppose I am the invalid I am in reality. It is at the expense of much spirits I prosecute my ministry, and discharge the duties which attach to it. I have a little youth who attends me every day, the youngest son of the widow H——, for whose improvement I use the Elegant Extracts, and there I see such ample instruction for youth, that I wish to recommend it to your dear little folks. I could produce nothing like it. Accompanied with your lectures nothing can be more suitable. I think John is at a good school, do not remove him. Let him at his present school acquire all he can, and live under your eye, and in your house. The years will insensibly glide forward when he will become your companion, with whom, having secured his affection by the tenderness of your conduct, you may pass your evenings with pleasure, though every friend should be at a distance. —I am, &c.

" *Painswick, March* 3, 1802."

To Mr. P——r.

" My dear sir,—Should I never more see your face in the flesh, I shall not be unmindful of you, Mrs P——, and your dear little family. The comforts I have received among you, and the favours imparted by you in my latter visits to the metropolis, are not to be erased from my memory. Mrs. P—— said 'Write to us,' and I did write, and I write again to show you, that not merely to disengage myself from a promise, but to convince you I bear you upon my heart. I wrote my other letter, and follow it with a second. I was glad to have my inquiries after you satisfactorily answered by Mrs. W——. I hope you have the indulgences of Providence, and an increase of divine grace continued to you. Though the former are very desirable, and set the mind at liberty from anxiety, they will not do, being alone. They may for the natural man, who, as he pants after, can be satisfied with the dust of the earth; but the Christian has soul wants, which are of a spiritual nature, and can only be satisfied by spiritual provision. It is furnished in a rich abundance, and every hungry soul shall be filled with it. The epicure cannot more highly

be delighted with his dainty meats, than the believer is with the provisions of the house of God, even of his holy temple. The neighbourhood of Hackney I find continues to be enriched with it, and London overflows with it. Our country is not barren; it has its sufficiency. Our Lord always suits his supplies to his family. Wherever he has an infant child, there shall be breasts which he shall suck and be satisfied. Yesterday I was supplying the congregation of Chalford, while the minister of that place was in my pulpit, and I found it good to be there. We find a little exchange good for the body and the mind. The ride of six or seven miles is refreshing, and I am very sensible of it. I cannot do as I have done. I am older in constitution than in years, yet have I passed sixty-four. I could be glad to be excused a third service on a Sabbath-day, but I, for the most part, am thus frequently engaged without abridging either, and in addition to this have week-day services. I sometimes suspect my limbs will fail me. I have as much difficulty in standing as in preaching, and am in constant pain, which, blessed be God, is not excruciating. He only knows to what extent my day is to be continued, who hath lengthened it thus far. The evening of it has arrived, and I am an expectant of rest—that rest which remaineth for the people of God. I adore the grace which has made me of their number, that I have partaken with them on earth, and am encouraged to believe I shall have my portion with them for ever. There, in that land of uprightness, where the Lord will gather all his people in one glorious body, the din of arms will no longer offend our ears, nor the cruelty and perplexity of war vex and distress our minds. The events of the present day are very serious, and they portend future serious events. To what lengths our inveterate and victorious enemy may be suffered to proceed is hard to say. He is our scourge, may he not be our destruction. He is the rod of God's anger, and probably may be burned, when the correction of which he is instrumental, shall have answered its end. May our prayers counteract his efforts, and salvation be appointed for walls and bulwarks about us. The spread of the Gospel is a blessed omen in our favour. I wish, in proportion to its prosperity in general, I could report great things at Painswick. Something, however, is doing. Our Sunday's school is kept in existence; for this and for several poor people, I could be glad of a few Bibles, if among your connexions you could procure me such a gift, with Watts's Psalms and Hymns. With kind and respectful salutations to Mrs. P—— and to Miss S——, if with you, and with my best wishes and prayers for your whole family, I am, &c.

"*Painswick, November* 24, 1806."

To Mr. J—s E——l

"I HAVE longed for an opportunity to sit down, and with suitable composure of mind, to acknowledge the dateless letter of my very dear friend. I am ashamed to be so long your debtor, without giving such a discharge as you are kind to accept. But the mind and the body have been alike infirm, and though forced into activity, they have not bent to letter writing, but when and upon subjects unavoidable. I little expected to have been informed of the removal of your valuable and dear mother. The last sight I had of her, would lead me to suppose she had many years before her, in which to be blessed by, and be a blessing to her dear J——s. But 'in the midst of life we are in death,' and while we seem to hold our friends firm, they slip from us, drawn by Him whose attractive power will have all unto himself, sooner or later, whom he hath secured for himself by the purchase of his precious blood. In that number was the excellent woman who gave you birth, and lived to see you so far on the journey of life, and to witness the gracious providence of God smiling upon you. I well recollect the placid facetiousness that mutually passed between you, when last at Bath, and the thoughts which it occasioned in my mind. I trust resignation and submission have enabled you to yield the Saviour his claim, and that the thought of your mother being glorified, reconciles you to her removal. I thank you, my dearest sir, for the account of her departure. I am yet behind, I hope ready to go; O that I may not have to say, 'Spare me a little,' when my Master's summons will require me to go hence. I carry about me some symptoms that the tabernacle is in a state of decay. I did not know what the close of the fall might produce.—Through mercy I am a little braced, but not strong. Mrs. W—— gets very feeble, and the remains of sight are very inconsiderable. She has expressed a desire to be removed if her life be spared till next winter, within a step or two of the house of God, and I am watching for an opportunity by the opening of Providence to indulge her. She says it will be as necessary for myself as for her. It will be attended with a little inconvenience, but to this I submit. I can say what I never could before, that I have settled my last year's accounts, in which my poor have had a portion, and have twenty pounds in the house. Whether when the lawyer's bill is settled, a trifle more may come to me, I cannot say. The property has sunk considerably, but even with the demands of government, prudently used, enough remains. Your benevolence being consecrated to the use of the poor, enables me to be a little more diffuse, and a very particular case engaging my

attention, renders it acceptable. May the liberal things you have devised, add permanency to your standing on the foundation of Providence, and may the dear offspring arising from you, inherit a large blessing, with which God has often seen fit to honour the parent's liberality. We are much refreshed and assisted in the journey of life, by the blessings of Providence. They are not our portion but only a part of it, and where it is withheld, it requires grace to submit to all the wants and cravings of nature without murmuring and repining.—God can and does give grace, suited to that disconsolate station, and in it the crumb is precious, which in affluence is only considered proper for the dogs. The Lord sometimes raises the poor from the dust, and if their advancement be sanctified, they carry the estimate of the crumb, according to what their former wants rated it at, and are careful of it, that it be not wasted; and with addition, make it subservient to the comfort of the needy. Though extreme need has not been a part of your experience, you have learned how to use properly, and liberally to dispose of property. May you always have a rich store from whence 'to do good and to communicate.' My kind regards accompany these to Mrs. E——, to Mr. W——, and Miss E——, to the whole number if they recollect me. My enfeebled and blind wife unites with me. She is greatly altered, but has stamina. How long we are to be together, or which is to precede the other into the state of blessedness, is only known to him who has his plan and purpose before him, to whom it becomes us to yield submission. To him I commend you, and am increasingly, my very dear sir, yours, &c.

"*Painswick*,
"*January* 22, 1807."

MEMOIRS

OF THE LATE

REV. JOHN CLARK,

WRITTEN BY HIMSELF; AND AT HIS REQUEST, PUBLISHED WITH REMARKS,

BY WILLIAM JAY.

TO MRS. CLARK, THE WIDOW; TO JOHN CLARK, ESQ. THE SON; TO THE CHURCH AND CONGREGATION, THE CHARGE; TO THE REV. JOHN INNES, THE SUCCESSOR OF THE LATE REV. JOHN CLARK,

This Memoir, with a few additional Remarks, is respectfully dedicated by

THE EDITOR.

TO THE READER.

IN December, 1807, the author and subject of the following narrative being in Bath for his health, informed me that he had written some considerable memoirs of his own life, which he wished to commit into my hands for perusal and publication. This intention he never executed personally: but soon after his death, his respected widow and his son gave me the papers in compliance with his repeated charge. I received the present from them, as I did the promise from him, on the condition of my possessing a discretionary power.

If it be asked in what way I have used this authority, I answer—it has only been in the way of abridgment. And with regard to the parts omitted, I would observe, that on the one hand, there was nothing in them that could have detracted from the substantial excellency of Mr. Clark; or on the other, that could have been important to his character, either in rendering it useful and impressive, or prominent and distinct. They were mere repetitions of journies and preachings, &c. without any remark of importance attached to them.

In the selection of what is retained and made public, the editor has had his motives, and they extended to every part of it: though for the perception and approbation of them, he must be indebted to the judgment of some, and the candour of others: as in a case of this kind, it cannot be supposed that he could attempt to state or vindicate every view that has influenced him. Some few things would not have obtained permission to appear, but for three reasons. First, an unwillingness to merge the peculiarity of the individual, and rob him of any distinguishing feature. Secondly, a fear of deviating too much from the design of the deceased, and the wishes and expectations of his friends and connexions. And thirdly, a supposition that an editor is not deemed answerable for every expression used, or opinion held by the author he publishes.

The editor, however, to prevent any mistaken inference from the supposition on which he has presumed, wishes it to be observed, that he is by no means ashamed of the leading doctrinal sentiments apparent in the memoir, and known to be held by the writer. But where there is a general agreement, there may yet be a number of subordinate differences. There are things which two individuals may hold to be equally true, but not equally important: they may therefore dissent from each other as to the degree of attention they deserve—and this will considerably affect the proportion in which they are dispensed. They may hold the same things to be not only equally true, but equally important; and yet dissent from each other as to the manner in which they should be enforced, whether abstractedly in their no-

tions, or in their experimental and practical bearings; whether in their qualities or uses; whether in the mechanical exactness of human systems, or in the fine glowing, natural undefineable freedom of scripture-language.

This article might be exceedingly enlarged, by extending the remark to a variety of subjects. But what the editor has to allege, either by way of exception or qualification, must be reserved for those reflections with which he may review the character and the narrative in the close of the work.

To the relations and friends of Mr. Clark the editor has to apologize for the delay of the publication, or rather to account for it, by observing—that as soon as the manuscript was put into his possession, he was obliged, by engagement, to take several considerable excursions from home; and that on his return from the last of them, he was visited by an indisposition that rendered relaxation necessary even in the ordinary duties of his office. The latter prevention ought, in a measure, to apologize for the execution, as well as the delay of the work.

WILLIAM JAY.

Percy-Place; March, 1810.

GRATEFUL MEMOIRS, &c.

The various occurrences that have attended the life of an individual, can be of little importance to mankind at large; and unless some of those events have been rather unusual, they will yield but small gratification to such as read merely for the sake of amusement. I should not, therefore, have presumed to obtrude the following memoirs upon the public notice, had they not been connected with the striking providence and grace of God, in raising and establishing a religious interest in the town of Trowbridge, in the county of Wilts, by my poor and unworthy instrumentality. Surely, the goodness of God, and his wonderful works to the children of men ought to be recorded; and no doubt, it will be a gratification to those who wish well to religion, to be informed how this little work was begun, and by what means it has been carried on, by the kind hand of our God upon us, unto the present moment. All glory and praise be to his name for ever and ever. Amen.

With respect to myself, I drew my first breath at Frome-Selwood, in the county of Somerset, on the 13th of January, O. S. 1745. —I was born of reputable parents, of the established church, who gave me an education rather beyond their situation in life, and beyond what they gave to any other of their children. The first twelve years of my life were spent at my native place, and were marked with nothing very observable; except that I had frequent convictions of sin from my earliest recollection, which proved a great preservative from many of the follies and vices that youth in general are prone to run into. I can also look back upon many and striking instances of the kind interposition of providence, in delivering me from imminent dangers—even from my infancy.

I was sent to learn Latin at nine years of age, in which I was enabled to make a tolerable proficiency, as I had an excellent master, and applied myself with diligence. My parents, being of the established church, sent me when about ten years old, to be confirmed by the bishop; and I recollect, that I was extremely affected at the ceremony, and when I returned home wept very much, and resolved, that if possible, I would never be guilty of another sin. I was fond of hearing sermons, especially if they were delivered with any degree of earnestness; but could not distinguish between a mere moral and evangelical discourse, till I heard that excellent, and I may say, seraphical preacher, Mr. Thomas Jones, of St. Saviour's, Southwark. O! what shall I render to God for his great goodness in casting my lot under the ministry of such a person! This was brought about by a remarkable providence. My father, though he was in a very good way of business at Frome, took a fancy to remove to London; where, however, he staid scarcely three quarters of a year, and then returned to fix his residence in Trowbridge—the place of his own and my mother's nativity.

My father now began to think of placing me out. It was in contemplation to send me to the university, but this, providence was pleased to overrule. Indeed, as about this time, six students had been expelled Oxford, for being religiously disposed; there seemed but little hope that any persons of seriousness would meet with much encouragement there. As the business of a brewer, which my father pursued, did not suit my inclination, it was proposed that I should be a clothier, and manage that business for him till I was at an age to take it upon myself. In the year 1766, being then twenty-one years of age, I was put into partnership with a brother-in-law, in the same line: about this time, I narrowly escaped being crushed to death by the falling of a house under repair; myself, with several more, had scarcely got without the door, when it fell down with a dreadful crash.

But before this period, I hope I had made some progress in heavenly things. The Lord had begun a good work in me, and he will never forsake the work of his own hands. Great were my enjoyments in drawing nigh to him in secret; in sitting under his precious word; in conversing with pious Christians. With a company of these, I soon became acquainted, especially one individual—a dear relation, who was seeking the Lord like myself, and who was a great encouragement to me in pursuing the good ways of the Lord.

On Christmas-day, 1763, she invited me to the sacrament. As I was then but eighteen years of age, I trembled at the thought; at last, however, I consented, and we received it at a church about a mile from Trowbridge, from the hands of a pious minister, settled there. But it is impossible to describe the sacred delights I experienced at that ever-memorable time. I wet the ground with tears of joy and thankfulness, when I took the

bread and the wine into my hands in commemoration of the dying love of my dear Redeemer. From that time, I constantly attended the sacrament at our parish church, concluding that the efficacy of it is not destroyed to him that receives it in faith, by the unworthiness of him that administers it.—See the twenty-sixth Article. I likewise attended the preaching there as regularly as I could, though I took every opportunity of hearing the gospel elsewhere.

Hitherto, the Lord had tenderly indulged me; but now I was to be taken and taught to walk by faith. Many, great, and grievous temptations I began to experience, the reason of which I can now discover. They were, doubtless, to prepare me for the work he had for me afterwards to do. I was tempted to call in question the truth of my Christianity, and almost wished I had gone greater lengths in sin and wickedness, that my conversion might have been rendered the more conspicuous. But I was enabled to ward off this temptation by the argument of the man in the gospel, who had received his sight:—"Whereas I was blind, now I see." Admitting, said I, even the worst, were all my former profession but a delusion, yet it is not even now too late to come to him who has promised to be found of *all* that seek him.—Another temptation more dreadful than even this, was my questioning the authenticity of the Scriptures themselves; and "if the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do?" I was ever of an inquisitive disposition, and not being as yet acquainted with the evidences of Christianity, I was horribly perplexed, and almost led to utter desperation; but blessed be God, this only drove me to examine more narrowly into the truth of the Bible; and laid the foundation of those Dialogues that I afterwards published, under the title of Fidus and Eumenes. But I am persuaded, that nothing will completely satisfy the mind on this subject, but the all-powerful application of the truth of the word by the Spirit of God. These things are hid from the wise and prudent, and revealed unto babes. Many other were my temptations at this period, so that sometimes I wished I had been made a brute—a serpent—a toad, or that I had never existed at all.

My worldly friends and relations began also to manifest their disapprobation on seeing me associate with the people of God, who were in general poor, and branded with the odious name of Methodists. Particularly my father was roused by some of his acquaintances, who insinuated to him, that if I continued to go on in this way, it would entirely ruin my fortune in this world; though, thanks be to God, they were mistaken, for none has greater reason to be thankful on that head than myself. But he used me very harshly, sometimes even proceeding to blows. But this the Lord also turned into good to me; for my being enabled to take all patiently, and not being permitted to make any resistance, or to use any impertinent language to my father, has frequently, on reflection, given me the most pleasing satisfaction. It also by degrees won him over to treat me with tenderness, and even respect, and at last he became one of my constant hearers.

I continued to assemble with my dear Christian friends every Sunday morning and evening, and once on a week night; for they would not break in upon the public service of the church, being mostly members of the establishment. Here the time was spent in prayers, and reading the Scriptures, and sometimes a sermon of some pious and evangelical divine. As I was judged to be a pretty good reader, I was prevailed upon sometimes to take that office. This first of all induced me to write my own thoughts on a text of Scripture, and read it to them: at which they expressed pleasure and edification, and entreated me to go on in this way. The first discourse of this kind I recollect to have read, was the 8th of April, 1765, from John x. 14. But as writing sermons at length was too laborious for me, and interfered greatly with my worldly business, I was induced sometimes to content myself with taking down only the heads of a discourse, and filling up the rest extemporaneously. This I continued for nearly two years, till being invited to preach at a village about three miles from Trowbridge, called East Town, I ventured to trust entirely on the promised assistance of the Holy Ghost; and without any previous study or arrangement of the subject, preached from Mark xvi. 16. This I was enabled to do with so much ease and comfort to myself, and satisfaction to the audience, that thenceforward, I never made use of any notes, but was enabled to cast myself entirely on the divine goodness. And this suited best with my occupation as a clothier; for I was frequently obliged to go from my counting-house directly into the pulpit, and could get no time for previous meditation. But though this was sometimes attended with much cause for humiliation, and often tried my confidence, it became at length so habitual, that I always made the most regular discourses, as well as the most animated and useful, when I adhered to that method; and every deviation from it served rather to embarrass me when in the pulpit. I considered, however, that this by no means excused me from studying, in a general way, God's holy word and wonderful works; but rather enforced so much the more the necessity of it, that I might lay up a stock of things new and old, ready, when called, to bring forth to the public. My business, also, being with persons of different descriptions, especially the working poor, gave me an opportunity of knowing the real manners of men, and seeing

more into the depravity of human nature. I was, also, always fond of philosophical researches, and especially of mechanics; and this occasionally, together with music, to which I was exceedingly attached, served to fill up my leisure hours, and enlarge my ideas of things, as well as men. Thus has the Lord taught me from my youth, and I have according to my ability hitherto declared his wondrous works.

But now I began to be very much grieved, having preached several years and seeing very little good done. I feared that I had intruded myself into the ministry, and had run before I was sent. One Saturday evening, after having despatched my business, as I was solemnly musing on this important point, and beseeching my Heavenly Father to direct me, I had these words forcibly impressed on my mind:—"Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind." This seemed to point out all the particulars that I had wished to know: viz.—That the Lord had designed me for the ministerial office—That my charge lay among the people with whom I had associated—That my business was to feed them and watch over them—That I should cheerfully and willingly engage in it—and seek no worldly advantage from it. The remaining part—"and when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away"—did not at that time occur to my mind; but afterward, being at the ordination of a minister at Warminster, the charge turned upon this latter clause; and I then received very great encouragement from this gracious promise, and was glad that I did not remember it before, as it helped to prove that I did not engage in the Lord's work from even the prospect of a heavenly reward. After this, I began to think of the pastoral office, and having preached from these words—"Let all things be done decently and in order," I was more confirmed in my thoughts about it: for hitherto there was no bond to unite us, nor discipline to correct any misconduct, but every one did what was right in his own eyes. We were also greatly annoyed by the Sandemanians on the one hand, and the Arminians on the other, who were continually seeking to draw away disciples after them. I preached from this text September 14th, 1767, and from that time I began to mention my design to some of my dear friends, who expressed themselves extremely happy at the thought of being connected more closely, and having the Lord's supper administered among ourselves. After a month's deliberation, and much earnest prayer to the great head of the church, we proposed having a meeting to consult about this important matter; and on the 15th of November, 1767, and after making a short comment on Nehemiah ii. 17—"Ye see the distress that we are in, how Jerusalem lieth waste, and the gates thereof are burned with fire: come, and let us build up the wall of Jerusalem, that we be no more a reproach"—we kneeled down and besought the Lord to direct us, and not suffer us to do any thing inconsistent with his glory and our mutual comfort and advantage. On rising from our knees, nine of us, six men and three women, made a confession of our faith, and solemnly gave our hands to each other in the fear of God, with a determination to watch over each other, and to promote to the utmost, our mutual welfare. Others were present, but chose to wait a little longer before they joined us: but after this, our number quickly increased, and great joy and Christian affection prevailed among us. It was then proposed that we should meet again in a few days, and settle the order of this infant church, and choose a minister to preside over it, and break the bread of life to the rest. We accordingly met, and they unanimously proposed me as their pastor; and as I had before expected it, and had made it the matter of most mature reflection and earnest prayer, I accepted their call, but with extreme fear and diffidence. We then kneeled down and besought the Lord Jesus, the chief Shepherd, to direct and bless us. We agreed to have the sacrament every Lord's-day, but this some years after, from various causes, yielded to a monthly administration. We agreed to provide a box for the relief of the poor, to receive those who applied for admission as members, with the most strict attention to their faith and practice; but if any stranger not dwelling in the town, wished at any time to sit down with us occasionally, he was welcome, provided he came properly recommended by a member of the church; and we had no objection to any denomination of Christians partaking with us, who loved the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity; for we determined from the beginning to avoid all bigotry and zeal for a party. Some have objected to the validity of my pastoral office, not having had, as they call it, a regular ordination. But though I have no objection for a minister, who is chosen by any assembly of Christians to be their pastor, to call in his brethren in the ministry to be witnesses of their mutual engagement, and to assist them with their prayers and advice—yet in my case, it was utterly impracticable: for as to the established clergy, however inclined, they are forbidden such a service; and the dissenting ministers around us, were so jealous and narrow, that it would have been in vain to apply to them, especially as we never professed to be a sect of regular dissenters. I judge that every church is competent to choose their own minister, as every family has, unquestionably, a right to choose their own servant, without the concurrence of the heads of any other family—yet I bless God, we have not

been without the repeated testimony and acknowledgments of his dear servants of various denominations, Clergymen, Independents, Baptists, &c. who have publicly and solemnly prayed for us under the character and description of a church of Christ, and for me, likewise, as a pastor over it. But, I trust, we have that which is beyond every thing else, the approbation and blessing of the great Shepherd and Bishop of souls, who has now, at the time of my writing this, continued to bless us with all the privileges of a church nearly thirty-eight years, and I hope will continue to do so to the end of the world. Amen.

1767, Nov. 18th. Had a sister who died of a dropsical complaint; and she being the first of our family that had gone into eternity since I had been capable of reflection, it was a very awful providence to me, and I endeavoured to improve it by reading a sermon to our relations who were invited to the funeral, after their return from the grave. When I first proposed it, I could perceive some of them sneered, but they were afterward very attentive: and I hope it was attended with the blessing of God to their souls.

1768. I had now gone on comfortably for some time, and the Lord was with me, and carried me through my work, though I often found myself greatly fatigued in preaching every Lord's-day three times, besides administering the sacrament, and always Monday and Thursday evenings at home, besides frequent excursions into the neighbouring towns and villages. I had also many discouragements arising from a sense of my own inability, the greatness of the work in which I was engaged, and the little success that seemed to follow in proportion to my labours. At length, my discouragement prevailed to such a degree, that on the Lord's-day, Feb. 21st, having had, in the afternoon in particular, a very distressing opportunity, I resolved to terminate my preaching with that exercise. Drinking tea afterwards with some dear Christian friends, I told them my intention. They said all they could to dissuade me from giving up the work, especially that evening, when there would be a large congregation assembled, and they must be disappointed, as it was impossible to procure any other minister, the time being nearly expired for the service to begin. I would not give ear to any of their entreaties, but positively declared that I could not think of preaching any more. While we were warmly debating the case, some one rang at the door. This proved to be a pious old woman, a member of our church, who being admitted, said she came to desire me to preach from these words:—"Then I said I would speak no more in his name, but his word was as a fire shut up in my bones, and I was weary with forbearing, and I could not stay." Jeremiah xx. 9. She said she did not know where the words were, but her mind was much impressed with them: and she could not but come and desire me to preach from them that evening. I asked her if she knew the subject on which we had been discoursing: she said, she did not. This extraordinary circumstance struck me very much. I could not but conclude it to be an interposition of providence, and therefore consented to preach that once, and from the same words; and I bless God, I found it a blessing; and though I have had many trials in my work, I have never been so violently tempted on this head ever since.

I had now many invitations round the country to come and preach to them, which I accepted. Sometimes I preached in private houses, and often in the fields, to great numbers; and hope the Lord often blessed my poor endeavours to the conversion of ungodly sinners, and the comfort of his own people.

1769, August 23d. My mother died this morning about six o'clock. Happening to be alone with her when she expired, I was very much affected; and calling up my father and the rest of the family, I endeavoured to improve the awful warning by speaking to them of their own situation were death to overtake them suddenly: they heard me very patiently, and seemed greatly affected. My mother was, I hope, seeking after salvation, but I never heard her say much of her experience. She was very kind to the poor, and attended constantly the sacrament at the church, and frequently came to hear me. While at London, she was very fond of hearing Mr. Thomas Jones, of St. Saviour's; and I would hope, at that time, serious impressions were made on her mind.

February 22d. Took a journey to dispose of my cloth. Preached at Romsey—Winterbourn—Salisbury, &c. to good congregations, and with much freedom.

1770, May 27th. I was seized with extreme pain in my back, attended with a violent fever. It went from my back into every joint of my body, which in succession swelled very much, and became so inflamed and painful, that I could not bear to be touched. This confined me to my room nearly six weeks, and a great part of the time to my bed. My Christian friends were very kind and affectionate; and before I was able to go to the house of God, many of them came into my chamber, to whom I expounded the first chapter of the Philippians, and was peculiarly struck with the words, verses 24, 25, 26. The whole chapter seemed adapted to my situation, and afforded me unspeakable delight. Indeed, I was extremely happy, at the prospect of eternity, should it have pleased the Lord to take me.

July 8th. Was so far recovered as to be

able to go to the meeting, and preached from Hebrews ii. 9. I was very languid, but hope in a degree sensible of the goodness of God in bringing me again into his house, and among his people.

July 30th. Had a call to London. On the road, hearing of a young man that was confined in Marlborough jail for robbery on the highway, I felt greatly disposed to go and talk with him. When I entered the prison, he appeared very penitent, and sorry for the crime he had committed. I gladly embraced the opportunity to recommend the precious Redeemer of sinners. He showed me a letter he had written to his uncle, to endeavour to save his life; but I advised him not to resort to any indirect means to evade justice, but if he was condemned by the laws of his country, to submit to death for an example to others. This, alas! was a doctrine hard to be embraced for a person in his situation: but he seemed to acquiesce; and what pleased me, was the concern the poor creature manifested for his fellow-prisoners, whom he entreated me to visit; and one of whom was confined for a similar crime. I did so, and my mind was much affected by what I saw and heard. Lord, may I ever be preserved from sin, and be content with such things as thy good providence shall bestow upon me! —Meeting with a gentleman and his wife, who were of the people commonly called Quakers, traveling the same road, and finding them seriously disposed, we journeyed several miles, discoursing on such religious subjects as we were all agreed in. As we put up at the same inn, we supped and spent the evening together; but I was much surprised to find that on my proposing prayer before we went to rest, they strenuously opposed it. I begged one of them to engage, but could not prevail; I thought it therefore my duty to engage, but was sorry to observe their irreverent behaviour at the time.—What a pity is it that Christians, serving the same God, and believing the same scripture revelation, should be so inflexible in trifles of no importance, and for a mere form, break Christian communion.—After finishing my business at London, and hearing many excellent sermons, I returned to Trowbridge August 12th, and again entered on my work, being kindly greeted by the brethren.

The place of worship we first occupied had been too small for the congregations that assembled; it was, therefore, proposed by some kind friends, to build a place that might at the same time serve the purpose of a dwelling-house, and the rooms be so disposed as to admit of a large number of people by taking up some of the floor occasionally, and thus making the upper chambers answer the end of galleries. This was done, and we preached in it for several years. But now the place became too strait for us; and therefore, my dear friend and relative, Miss Cook, who was now Mrs. Turner, proposed purchasing a piece of ground, and building a more suitable place for divine worship.

September 5th. We have now many persons who frequently come from Devizes and other towns and villages around us. May the Lord increase our usefulness with this intended enlargement of our tent. The principal people in the town acknowledge that much good has been done in moralizing the people, though many of them do not approve of the doctrines which have effected it.

At this time, I was led to interpose my poor endeavours to moderate an unhappy difference that had arisen between the Baptist minister of our town, and some of his people. I greatly sympathized with poor Mr. R. and wrote a letter to his church, entreating them to love and unity; which, I trust, was kindly received; but it did not remove the dispute, as their minister was shortly after obliged to leave them.

September 14th. I paid a visit to the friends at Devizes. It was requested that I should preach in the Baptist meeting, but the minister would not consent: I was therefore obliged to preach in a private house; not, I hope, without the approbation of my dear Master.

October 9th. Preached at Melksham, in the Baptist meeting; these friends being more liberally minded than those of Devizes. There were present some of all denominations of Christians in the town.—O! how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity.

I still continued going out into the villages as I had opportunity, the particulars of which would swell these papers too much, and therefore for the future shall omit such excursions, as well as my ordinary labours at home, unless any thing should be found particularly worthy of recording. About this time, I began to be encouraged by some seals to my ministry. I was often afraid I had been labouring in vain, and spending my strength for nought: but now it pleased God to give me more intimation of his blessing the word preached. Several characters notoriously wicked, have been convinced of the error of their ways, and are now living in the most exemplary manner, to the astonishment of their neighbours. This is a sufficient recompense for all my pains and reproaches. Besides this, I have had many acknowledgments from persons that have been greatly edified and comforted. Yet I have to regret, that some of those who seemed for a season to run well, are turned aside to some dangerous errors that have lately been introduced into the town, making faith to be nothing more than a simple assent to the truth of the gospel, and denying the influences of the Spirit of God.—O my soul! come not thou into their secret; and unto their assembly, my honour be not thou united.

1771. My father having removed to Lon-

don with my brother, I am now going to board with my friends, Mr. and Mrs. Turner. I have hitherto had but little success in trade, but I am doing the Lord's work. He is too good a master to suffer me to want; yet I would not be less diligent in attending to my worldly affairs.

April 24th. Preached at a village called Nasteed, about a mile from Devizes, at the house of a Quaker, who behaved extremely kind. We had a room full of people, and upwards of twenty years after, I had the happiness to find that the word was made effectual to the conversion of a profligate sinner.—The Lord's name be praised.

Going in business to a place called West Lavington, I could not but pity the extreme ignorance of the people, and promised I would come and preach to them. They appeared very thankful; and accordingly I proposed Whit-tuesday, thinking they might be more at leisure to attend. On that day I went, accompanied by a great many friends from our town, Devizes, and other places. When the hour of preaching arrived, we found the people occupied in bull-baiting, and as we were going to the spot, either by accident, or design, they let the animal go loose; we saw him at some distance from us as furious as a lion, and the women began to be much terrified, but no mischief ensued; he passed us as gentle as a lamb. A vast concourse of people was assembled. I began the service, and it went on for some time without interruption, but when I named my text "repent and believe the gospel," the rabble so distracted and disturbed the congregation, that I found it was impossible to proceed. I therefore postponed what I had to say to another opportunity; when, I told them, I would come and preach from the same text. All my injury was the soiling of my clothes with a few rotten eggs; I found myself very happy through the whole, and hope some good was done, as several wept much, and desired me to come again.

May 28th. Was at Holt, three miles from Trowbridge, to hear Mr. Rowland Hill, who preached under a large tree, in the middle of the place, from Ephesians v. 14, and thus commenced an acquaintance and friendship that has continued ever since, and I hope will for evermore.

May 31st. Preached at Broughton Gifford, from 2 Timothy iii. 12. and had very great liberty and love to immortal souls—a large congregation and very attentive.

June 4th. Agreeably to promise, went again to preach at West Lavington. I was told on the road, that the farmers had collected a great quantity of rotten eggs to throw at me, but this had no effect upon me. Having some time to spare, I called on Dr. Stonehouse, the clergyman of Chiveral, (the intimate friend of Mr. Harvey) about a mile from Lavington, who prayed with me, and encouraged me very much. When I stood up to preach, there was a very great company of people, far greater than the last time, and I had no person to stand by me but a man who seemed to have very little knowledge of religion. But the Lord was with me, and I found it better to trust in him than in an arm of flesh. I preached from the same text, and the people were all exceedingly quiet and attentive till I had done, when one or two behaved to me with great rudeness; but I bless the Lord, I was enabled to resent it only by wishing them the best of blessings for time and eternity.

I now found a severe trial from some of my dearest friends in Christ. I sincerely loved and respected them; but being very much inclined to Arminianism, they were continually teasing me on that head, and would fain have introduced these principles among our little flock, so that I was obliged to withstand them to the utmost of my power.

June 11th. Heard Mr. Cornelius Winter, at Bradley, and found a very great attachment to him: he had formerly been an attendant on Mr. Whitefield, in his voyage to America.

The Lord was now with us of a truth. Seldom a week past, but one or more came to inform me of the effect of the word on their souls. Sometimes, I have found four or five together weeping, and inquiring what they must do to be saved; and what is more remarkable, it was chiefly among those who had been very moral in their conduct, and depending on their own righteousness.

The eve of the Lord's-day has frequently been very precious to me after my weekly business has been finished, and I have had a view of the solemnities of the approaching sabbath, and the important work in which I was about to engage, has deeply impressed my mind. I was favoured with a particular instance of this kind, Saturday, July 13th, after being greatly affected with the arduous service I was employed in, and especially with what it would be, when called to preach in our new chapel to such an increased congregation; I earnestly besought the Lord to give me some encouragement from his holy word, and opening the Bible, I was directed to the second chapter of Haggai; and all from the first to the ninth verse, seemed so extremely to the purpose, that I could not but be thankful and astonished.

August 4th. Went to London and continued about three weeks. Was highly feasted in hearing the gospel from so many eminent and pious ministers, both in the established church and out of it. I generally endeavour to be disengaged myself, as my labours at home are so abundant; and I love to get what I can from the diversified gifts of God's dear servants.

November 20th. We opened our new place of worship—a commodious building

forty feet long, by thirty wide—which we called the Tabernacle; for we approved of the sentiments of Mr. Whitefield, though he had never preached among us, nor had I ever conversed with him, or even heard him preach, except once in the church at Bradford. We had very full congregations each time. As my brethren that were present insisted that I should preach the first sermon in it, with great reluctance I complied, and spoke from Ezekiel xlviii. 35. Mr. Roquett, a clergyman of Bristol, preached in the afternoon, from Psalm xcix. 15—18. Mr. Ware, one of the countess of Huntingdon's students, in the evening, from Genesis xxviii. 17. I had composed some suitable hymns for the occasion, which we sung. It was a very blessed day. The utmost harmony and joy prevailed.

We have now very crowded auditories; and great numbers return home again, not being able to get in. This is, no doubt, in a great measure, owing to novelty; but yet it is a matter of thankfulness, if any thing conduces to bring sinners under the word of God: we may hope it will not prove in vain.

December 19th. Thursday evening, I preached from Matthew xxii. 12; and it was attended with a remarkable circumstance. A young person came out of mere curiosity to hear, and it pleased God to make the word the means of convincing her of her sinful and dangerous condition—but it was little thought by her or me at this period, that we should ever be brought into so close a connexion as afterwards took place: for six or seven years from that period, she was pointed out to me for a friend and companion through life. Considering the result of the occasion, the text was singular—"Friend, how comest thou in hither, not having on a wedding garment."

This has been a very important year of my life, and of the cause of God in this place. Hundreds of my town's people, of all sorts crowd to hear the word of God: some for the benefit of their precious souls, and some to ridicule and scoff. Many of the greatest profligates of the town, and military officers who are stationed here, come among the rest. We have been threatened with disturbance, but is has never been permitted. My worldly friends and relations would fain dissuade me from exerting myself so much, under an apprehension that it will be injurious to my health, but I do not find that I am hurt by it. If I was, surely the eternal salvation of one soul is of far greater importance than a few years' preservation of bodily health—yet I would not be imprudent, or presumptuous. Lord, be thou my director and protector.

Christmas-day. Preached three times as usual. In the evening, I found a young minister, Mr. Rippen, of the Baptist persuasion; I went to him after service, and begged he would preach for me the morrow evening, especially as my engagements were rather this week extraordinary. He readily consented; but some of the Baptist brethren dissuaded him from it!—O! how much mischief does bigotry for forms occasion to Christian love and fellowship. Friday I went and heard Mr. Rippen, at the Baptist meeting, from Matthew xxv. 6. a very good discourse; he appears to be a very lively and zealous preacher.

1772, January 1st. Began the new year at Melksham, where I preached from Revelations xxi. 5.—"Behold, I make all things new."

January 8. I began this evening catechising the children on a week night, as my time on the Lord's-day is too much occupied to attend to it. The Lord has graciously owned this part of my office to several children, some of whom have afterwards joined the church, and made a good confession.

January 9th. A company of young persons applied to me to grant the use of the meeting on a week-day morning, to assemble together for prayer. Happy was I to grant their request. O! what a delightful thing to seek the Lord in the days of our youth.

I think we have reason to believe the Lord is smiling on our attempts to diffuse the knowledge of his precious salvation: his word—his spirit—and his providence concur in encouraging us to proceed. A striking instance he has given us of the latter. Our kind friends, Mr. and Mrs. Turner, were surprised on their taking stock this Christmas, to find that they had gained the last year more than sufficient to defray the expense of the building, besides what they had expended in housekeeping, though they had gained no more, they imagine, by their business before, than barely the expenses of their family: nor is his hand less visible in blessing the word preached. Persons of all descriptions are continually coming to me to declare what the Lord has done for their souls; some convinced of their sinful state, and wishing to know how they shall be saved; and some to express the joy and consolation they have received under the gospel. There are seven or eight of the most notorious sinners in the town, who were drunkards, swearers, sabbath-breakers, and even a terror to their neighbours by their wickedness, who now constantly attend, and are now reformed from their abominable ways, to the astonishment of all around them.—Glory be to God for his wonderful works to the children of men!

As we have erected the standard of the gospel in the town, and, as it were, pitched our camp, so I determine now in the strength of the Lord to storm the devil's out-posts. For this purpose, I intend going round the country villages more and more.

I find I am much censured by formal professors for preaching without doors; and my relations account it mean and degrading; but

surely I have the example of the holiest character, and the greatest teacher that ever was; and I hope, I have the approbation of God and my own conscience. I desire nothing but to glorify his blessed name.

O how great is my satisfaction and pleasure to observe my father and sister, and other relations among the crowd! I hope the Lord will have mercy upon them. My father now comes to hear me constantly, though so severe against me at first.

June 3. Went again to Westaston, and stood on an upping stock in the street and preached. At first, my pride seemed to be hurt at the censure and contempt that I should incur from many of my fellow-creatures, but when I considered the dignity and importance of the work I was engaged in, I lost these degrading thoughts, and was content to become a fool for Christ. I came home with some of Studly-Green, to whom my ministry had been blessed; and was greatly pleased to hear that they had consented to meet together regularly to sing and pray at each other's houses: some of them had been notoriously wicked.—Called to visit a person extremely ill in the small pox; there was a room full of people. I read a chapter and prayed with them. The poor woman has been very wicked, and is dreadfully terrified at the thought of dying.—O! what a mercy is it to be possessed of a good hope through grace.

June 22d. At Southwick-Green, a great company; and no disturbance, but a few persons talking at a distance. After preaching, I went and reasoned with them; and they seemed very much abashed.—Alas! if they cannot stand before the reproof of a fellow-mortal, how will they abide the day of *his* coming, who trieth the heart and the reins!

July 5th. After preaching this evening, my heart was much comforted and encouraged by the great love and respect shown me. Both sides of the way were lined by people, who strove which could express the greatest regard. The sermon seemed a general blessing; and one person in particular said, he would not have but heard it for a £1000. This the Lord has designed, perhaps, as a counterbalance to some grievous scandals that have been cast upon me the week past: I know they are unfounded, but I know also that Satan bears me no good will.

July 22d. Visited one of our members—an aged gentlewoman who seems near her end, and was much refreshed to see her spirit so calm and resigned—either to live or die.

July 29th. At Hilperton-Marsh. The clergyman of the parish, and Mr. B——y, the justice of the peace, and his wife and family were among my hearers, who behaved with the greatest respect and civility. Mr. B——y afterward invited me to go into his house and take some refreshment.

September 19th, Saturday. Have reason to admire the goodness of the Lord in carrying me through such a multiplicity of labours this week, exclusive of my attention to trade. Yet I bless his name, I feel myself well and happy.

November 1st. Our society being now very considerably increased, I thought it right to call them together, to recognize our former covenant as a church of Christ; and to engage anew to fulfil the duties of it to each other. I told them I was at their service, but I would rather, if they approved of it, resign up my office to any pastor they should choose. This proposal threw them all into tears, and they unanimously and most earnestly entreated me still to take the care of them. I then pointed out some of the duties they owed to their minister and to each other; and asked if they chose to continue me as their pastor upon those conditions—if so, they would signify it by lifting up their hands, which they all instantly and solemnly did, while I prayed to God to confirm us and bless us as a church of his own.

I have been lately much encouraged by visiting two old dying Christians, who expressed themselves very happy at the prospect of death.

November 20th, we kept as the anniversary of opening our place of worship. I preached morning and evening; Mr. Roquett in the afternoon.

A great many persons are now offering themselves to be joined to us in Christian fellowship; but we are exceedingly cautious whom we admit. They undergo the strictest examination, first by me privately, then by the whole church. Yet after all, it is to be feared some unworthy communicants will creep in.

Thursday being the last day of the year, I took for my text Psalm cii. 25—27, and do not recollect ever closing a year with such solemnity before. Many have been the mercies of the past year—may the ensuing be marked by more abundant diligence in the ways of the Lord.

1773. Hitherto, we had gone on in perfect harmony with respect to points of doctrine. For as we were originally of the Church of England, we all firmly held the tenets of it, usually called Calvinistic, as expressed in her public prayers and the thirty-nine articles. But now one of our dear friends, and who had great authority among us, having become acquainted with some pious relations, who were among Mr. Wesley's people, and were very strenuous advocates for Arminianism, she was tinctured herself, and sought every occasion to introduce the principles among us. She not only pressed us to admit persons who held these sentiments as members of our church, but whenever any popular preacher among them

made his appearance, she endeavoured to bring him forward; and as our place of worship was not yet vested in the hands of trustees, but still continued in the sole power of one individual, we could not always avoid the preaching of such men among us. This has often been a source of great uneasiness to us. One of them, a captain, at this time preaching about the country, and by his regimentals, and the violence of his manner, having rendered himself popular, our dear, but mistaken sister would needs invite to preach, and would not be persuaded to the contrary. He preached several times: his preaching was exceedingly contradictory—tending greatly to distress tender consciences, and distract those who were unsettled in their minds: he asserted that Christians might be perfect in this life—that they must know the exact time and even place where they were justified—yea, that they could not be Christians without it—that those who believed never doubted afterwards. I took an opportunity, and with much tenderness, pointed out his mistakes to him, which he seemed to take kindly; but my dear cousin very much resented it afterwards, which caused me great uneasiness.

March 21st. Have just heard of the death of a person who has left a glorious testimony to the power of the gospel. He was formerly a very wicked character. About six years ago, I visited him in a dangerous fit of sickness. He was than horribly afraid of death, and made many protestations of amendment should it please God to spare him.—It pleased God to spare him and he became more wicked than ever—not only a drunkard and profane swearer, but took every opportunity to ridicule religion. About a year and a half ago, he came scoffing to hear me; but the Lord was pleased to put a stop to his scoffing, and sent him home deeply convicted of his unhappy condition. But he was soon relieved by faith in the Lord Jesus: and has since been abundant in offices of love, and patient endurance of tribulation for the sake of his profession. He was very assiduous in visiting the sick, and has sometimes sat up with them all night. He now was very faithful in reproving his old companions in sin; and for this he gained many a scoff from them, which he bore with meekness and fortitude, especially the abuses and extravagancies of a drunken and wicked wife. I visited him in his last moments; but found a pleasing contrast to what I had observed in his former illness. He was then dreadfully afraid of death, but now he said his greatest comfort was to think he was so near it.

April 4th. I have been this afternoon called to another important part of my office. Five of my brethren's children were brought for baptism, and I baptized them in the presence of a very large and solemn assembly. As I judge we should not engage in any thing of a religious nature without being thoroughly convinced in our own mind of the propriety of it, and without being able to give some reasons for it to the public, I wrote out a sermon and read it. It was greatly satisfactory to those who heard it, and I was much solicited to publish it; but I declined it, fearing it might subject me to a controversy with my Baptist friends, which I wish by all means to avoid.

April 18th. Hitherto we had made use of a box with an opening in the lid, for our contributions to the poor and sick members of our church, and others occasionally; but not finding this mode sufficient, we this afternoon made a collection at the Lord's table, and were pleased to find the cheerfulness with which every one seemed ready to give. This mode we have continued ever since.

May 9th. I began my summer excursions into the country villages, and preached at Simington.

August 7th. Was invited to preach at Frome, my native place. At first, it appeared formidable to think of preaching to my old play-fellows and acquaintances; and yet I have had a desire to declare to them what God hath done for my soul.

I have lately had a sight of Mahomet's Alcoran. How infatuated must rational creatures be to believe such shocking absurdities. I bless my God, this book has greatly tended to endear my Bible.

November 17th. Second anniversary. I preached in the morning from Psalm cxviii. 15. Mr. Roquett in the afternoon, from 1 Thessalonians v. 16. In the evening, Mr. Marshman, Baptist minister, from Haggai i. 5. Blessed be God, it has been a joyful festivity. Mr. Roquett also preached Thursday and Friday evenings. We parted Saturday morning with great regret.—O! when shall the day come that we shall part no more.—Thus we have concluded another year. Great have been our trials, and great our mercies: and we have had very considerable additions to our little society, of such as, I hope, will be eventually saved.

1774, January 2d. I this morning began expounding the assembly's catechism. I intend to go through it by taking a question every Sunday morning. I teach it to the children, and esteem it an excellent form of sound words.

This week past, I have been a good deal engaged by a curious emblematical drawing that I have sketched out, representing the chain of blessings which Paul enumerates in Romans viii. 29, 30. I have some thoughts of publishing it, as I hope God may see good to make it a blessing to others as he has to me.

April 13th. Went to the sessions at Devizes, to get myself licensed as a preacher.

I have hitherto been licensed by the King of kings only, but being in danger of some parish offices, which would be extremely inconvenient to me as a preacher, I thought it prudent to sue for the protection of the legislature.

April 17th. We met to choose a deacon in the room of one who has forfeited his place by some imprudent step. We conformed as much as we could to the primitive mode: I proposed two to the church, whom I thought the most eligible, and then we prayed and drew lots.

July 24th. We examined nine persons, who were unanimously admitted into the church.

October 9th. We met on the painful business of examining into the conduct of a brother and his wife, for several charges brought against them, and especially their unchristian behaviour towards each other; which being proved to be true, we suspended them from their church privileges, till they should amend their conduct, and live peaceably together. They submitted to the censure in a very becoming manner.

October 14th. We assembled according to appointment to humble ourselves before God in fasting and prayer, and to confess our sins as a church, and also to entreat him to restore our lapsed friends, and to give them repentance. Many of the brethren prayed. It was a solemn and affecting opportunity.

November 17th. Our third anniversary. I preached in the morning—Mr. Roquett in the afternoon—Mr. Woolmar in the evening. The congregations were great, and love and unity prevailed among all parties.

In consequence of an act of parliament for calling in the light gold, the weighing of money is become a very common and necessary employment. This suggested the hint of writing a little piece, called the Coin-Act, which has occupied much of my time this week, which Mr. Hill advised me to publish, offering to write a recommendatory preface; which I consented to do.

1775, January 23d. I have been this week attending a course of philosophical lectures and experiments. Hope I have gained much instruction, and been helped to admire the works of nature, and adore their great Author.

June 12th. This morning at four o'clock, set out for London. A person who owes me a great deal more than I at present possess, is likely to become a bankrupt. I am likely to lose all I have in the world, though I thank God, I shall hope to be able to pay all to whom I owe any thing. This has been a severe trial, yet I doubt not but all is well: we must not trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God.

I had the curiosity to see a Popish mass, and I hope I was thankful for our reformation.

July 28th. We this evening buried the remains of a gray-headed brother, who has been an honourable member ever since the commencement of our society. He was a poor Christian, but noble-spirited—true to his profession, and patient in affliction.

The present times are very alarming. War between the mother country and the colonies; an earthquake felt over a great part of England, and the excessive rains that have spoiled a great part of the corn in the ground, threatening a famine; I thought it my duty to appoint a day of fasting and prayer, which we kept Friday, 22d September. In order not to break in upon the labours of the poor, we met at five o'clock in the morning for one hour, and at ten, and at two, and at seven, when I preached from Isaiah lv. 6, 7.—O may the Lord hear and answer our petitions for a guilty land.

September 24th. Visited a very great persecutor at Hilperton. He is dangerously ill, and sent for me to pray with him. Nothing shows the reality of religion more than such instances as this, when even the despisers of it in their last extremity, seek the prayers of those whom they have despised. I was enabled to speak faithfully to him, but am afraid he is not properly acquainted with the state of his soul.

November 9th was kept in commemoration of the goodness of God, in giving us a place for his worship. This is the fourth anniversary.

Thus have we finished another year. It has been a year of peculiar trials to me both in the world and in the church. Yet it has pleased the Lord to bless the word exceedingly, and we have had seventeen members added.—The Lord's name be praised for all his mercies.

1776. I have sometimes, of late, been led to think whether the Lord may not be about to remove me to some other part of his vineyard. If my business does not succeed to afford me a maintenance, and should I be reduced, there is no probability that the people among whom I labour could afford me support, as they have been used to have the gospel preached to them free of any expense; and I have lately experienced some instances of their backwardness in things like these. I would be entirely at the disposal of my heavenly Father, and go wherever he directs; or stay and suffer his will here.

February 14th. The urgency of my affairs has called me again to London, and I set off this day. On Sunday evening before I left home, I preached from Philippians i. 27. I addressed the people with the greatest affection, not knowing that it might please God to continue me any longer among them. They were extremely affected, and many of them got up at four o'clock in the morning to take their leave of me.—May the will of the Lord be done.

March 13th. Came home, and the people received me affectionately, and I found a better spirit among some of them than when I left them. Had a great deal of fatigue while in town; and it is now certain I shall lose the greatest part of my property; but yet I hope I have been enabled to form some advantageous connexions, which may perhaps in time compensate for the loss I have sustained. I published while in London, my Golden Chain of Salvation.

April 3d. The church met to inquire into the conduct of one of our members, who has been accused of dishonesty, in clandestinely taking her master's coal without his knowledge. Three persons came to testify to her honesty, but she herself confessing that once she did take a small lump of coal without intention to return it again; we gave her a severe reprehension, and she received it in a christian-like manner.

Sunday, April 14th. Preached three times at Marlborough; baptized a child, and administered the Lord's supper. I was pleased to see the godly zeal of the people, in refusing to let a person sit down at the Lord's table among them who was accused of dealing in smuggled goods. Coming back next day over the downs, I observed a poor sheep lying in a very weak condition. As I overtook the shepherd with the rest of the flock, I asked him why he left that poor feeble creature behind: he said it could not follow the rest, and was not worth taking care of. This struck my mind, and as I was to preach at Devizes in the evening, I chose for my text John x. 11. and endeavoured, by way of contrast, to point out the good shepherd.

May 12th. I have been obliged to preach four times to-day. I do not find that it has hurt me, but it is too much to be continued. Have also preached four times in the week evenings following. But can we do too much for so kind a Master, and for the salvation of such valuable treasure as the souls of men?

November 4th. Could not sleep this morning, for reflecting on the unhappy differences that subsisted among the Baptists of our town, so as to shut up their meeting for these three weeks past. I found it much on my mind to write them a letter to entreat them to be reconciled. I sent it by one of their members, and I hope it had a good effect, for on the Wednesday following, they met to accommodate matters.

November 20th. Was at Bristol, to attend the funeral of my dear friend, Mr. Roquett, who died the 16th instant, universally esteemed and lamented. I was extremely affected by the regard shown to his memory by all ranks, which I have endeavoured to express in an elegy on the occasion. The next day we kept our fifth anniversary, rendered more solemn by his death, who had assisted in the dedication of the place. My text in the morning was Revelations vii. 13—17. In the afternoon, Mr. Sloper preached from Psalm ciii. 1—5. And in the evening, Mr. Rowland Hill from Nehemiah viii. 10. We had with us to day ten or twelve ministers of different denominations.

December 13th, was kept as a general fast. We had service three times, and in the morning I exhorted the people to go to the parish church, and we went to approve our loyalty to our king, and love to our country.

Christmas-day, preached at home three times, and I hope we can say we experienced in the best sense of the words—a merry christmas.

> Ours is the best cheer,
> No surfeit we fear,
> Insatiate enjoyment is temperance here.

Thus are the labours and trials of another year ended. Many important events have taken place. The Lord has seen good to deprive me of my worldly dependencies, by permitting a very great loss to befall me in trade; and also a relation to sell from me an estate that would have fallen to me. But all shall be well.

1777. January 5th. I began the first Sabbath in this year by taking a text out of the first Psalm. I mean to do this regularly out of all the Psalms of a Lord's-day morning, till I have gone through the whole book. I began also reading the first chapter of Genesis, and the first of Matthew, and I intend to read through the whole Bible and Testament.

February 10th. We received into the church this morning thirteen members. Another had applied, but being accused of some imprudences, we judged it proper to let him wait a little longer.

April 16th. Had another disagreeable meeting, which was convened this evening, to inquire into the behaviour of a member and his wife. Only the husband attended, and for want of his wife's evidence, we could not fully ascertain the truth; but they were both set aside from the Lord's table—the one from his own confession—the other for contempt, till they should be sensible of their faults, and acknowledge them. I had many times called upon them privately, and endeavoured to accommodate matters, till it grew so notorious and offensive, as to need the interposition of the church.

July 13th. Visited a woman who appears to be very near death, but is exceedingly happy. She died next morning, and Tuesday following was interred in our burial ground. She desired me to preach a sermon on the occasion; but as she named no text, I made the corpse itself my text, and mortality my subject.

November 16th. Received in seven members, who were all unanimously approved of.

—Blessed be God for his abundant goodness to us this year. He has brought us into favour with his dear ministers and people; united us more together in brotherly affection; and added to our number twenty-five souls.

1778. February 27th being set apart, by government, for a day of humiliation, we met as usual in the morning at seven o'clock, two in the afternoon, and half-past five in the evening; besides which, I exhorted the people in the morning to go to the parish church, to show our loyalty and Christian love.

March 26th. Have this day another blessing to thank God for. I am now commenced housekeeper, and have removed to a most delightful spot, suited to my taste, in a field near a river, with beautiful prospects all around.—O may my prospects of a better world never be obscured by too great an attachment to this.

May 7th. Took a little trip with my dear friends Mr. and Mrs. T. in a chaise to London, where we stayed a week, and then pursued our journey to Olney, in Buckinghamshire, on a visit to Mr. Newton, and to be at the wedding of the Reverend Mr. Jones, which was solemnized the next day by Mr. Newton. We found great affection and kindness from all, and returned home through Oxfordshire and Berkshire, Saturday evening.—Blessed be the Lord our God, who has carried us out and brought us home again in safety. While at London, I preached at many places.

June 14th. Expounded the seventy-first Psalm—a Psalm that has been peculiarly blessed to my soul, and which I have frequently called, by way of appropriation, *my* Psalm. It contains the whole of my experience from the day I began to preach to the present hour. It always seems new to me whenever I read it; and I have often received inexpressible consolation from it—O that when I am old and gray-headed, I may not be forsaken—and may I be enabled to talk of the righteousness of God all the day long.

June 21st. Preached before breakfast at our own place, and afterwards went over to Frome, and heard a sermon at church, from my old master, the Reverend P. Mason; and in the evening preached at Rook-Lane Meeting, to a very great congregation.

July 27th. We assembled according to previous notice given, to investigate the conduct of one of our deacons accused of intoxication. He was desired to attend, but did not. The charges against him being fully proved, he was put from his office, and the Lord's table, till he should discover repentance. Another person who had been suspended some time back, came and confessed his faults, and acknowledged that he was extremely grieved for what he had done, and was restored to the peace of the church.

August 23d. Received into the church four members, and

September 6th, five more; all of whom, giving a good account of their faith in Christ, and being irreproachable in their practice, were admitted joyfully by unanimous suffrage.

October 26th. Riding by Tyburn, in my return from London, I was greatly affected with the sight of two malefactors that were executing. I was told, seven more were hung there last Monday.—O what a mercy to be preserved from those atrocious sins that bring men to such a disgraceful end. But, alas! though my sins have not exposed me to the punishment of the gallows, yet they have rendered me worthy of the damnation of hell.—O! how can I sufficiently value the all-sufficient sacrifice that has been a propitiation for my sin, and procured for me eternal salvation.

1779. As it has pleased my Heavenly Father to give me an habitation of my own the year past, and also to give a favourable turn to my worldly affairs, I see it my duty to look out for a suitable companion for life, a help-meet to assist me both in my temporal and spiritual concerns. I have therefore this day, Tuesday, January 5th, after the most mature deliberation and earnest prayer, proposed the matter to a Christian friend for her approbation. She is one who is, I hope, both pious and discreet, "a partaker of the benefit." She is already my child and my sister; and I hope soon to make her my wife.

My engaging in trade, for my temporal support, is certainly attended with many advantages. It enables me to preach the gospel without charge; and rendering me independent of the people, it emboldens me to deliver the truth with greater freedom. It also tends to stop the mouth of the scoffing infidel, who would gladly represent all the ministers of Christ as preaching from mercenary views. Besides which, being in business enables a man to judge of the real characters and dispositions of people, better than he can learn them by theory or information; and he is thereby helped to address them in a more pointed and experimental way. Yet many and great are the difficulties to which a minister of this description is necessarily exposed; especially if his business be of the manufacturing kind, and he employs many of the vulgar and low-bred people, who are often actuated by the most selfish and illiberal motives. I have lately had many very striking proofs of this. Many unjust slanders have been propagated about me; many take the advantage of my being a preacher to impose upon me; and I am not at liberty to make that advantage of my business as another person can. Some to whom

I preach the gospel freely, even spoil my work. This often gives me uneasiness, and tends to check my labour of love: but I thank my God, I am still enabled to go on, having his approbation, and the testimony of a good conscience.

February 23d. Gave an exhortation to my spinners at Rockly, near Marlborough, after I had paid them: had much liberty and pleasure, and was heard with great attention.

December 12th. We met together to inquire into the behaviour of one of our members, who has lately professed to preach, for writing a very unkind and disrespectful letter to an aged minister. It being proved against him, and also that his motive for preaching was apparently worldly gain, he was excluded from the Lord's table, till he should be sensible of his faults, and make proper acknowledgments.

I have this year finished my organ, and some other mechanical and philosophical employments, with which I bless God, I have pleasingly filled up my leisure hours. We have not had additions so great this year as in some former ones, but I hope we have been more and more confirmed and strengthened in the good ways of the Lord. Our number is now upwards of one hundred communicants, and great love and zeal at present reign among us. O may they be continued, and increase abundantly!

1780. Sunday morning, April 9th, I called the church together to supplicate the divine throne; to bewail our imperfections; especially to lament over those who had been censured and suspended from our communion; and to pray that God would graciously be pleased to restore them: as also to beg his direction concerning many that have applied for admittance, that we might not be suffered to receive improper persons into our society; at the same time to praise his holy name for the many signal favours he has granted us, since we became an organized church. We also took opportunity to intercede for our country—that the Lord would be pleased speedily to bring our distracting and distressing affairs to a happy issue. We agreed to meet again the following Sabbath for the same purpose.

September 20th. This day my father died, aged 78. I hope the Lord has been gracious to him. He opposed me very much when I began to profess religion, but of late he has constantly attended on my ministry.

October 24th. As our society has been now formed upwards of thirteen years, we begin to have many removed from us by death; and it has been a peculiar satisfaction to me to see them depart with a good hope through grace; some of them full of comfort, and rejoicing in the prospect of eternal felicity. Surely this is an ample reward for all my abour. This evening I have interred one of our dear sisters, a most amiable young woman, who though naturally of a timid disposition, yet was strong in faith, and left our world with holy delight. I preached by her desire from Isaiah xii. 2. as expressive of the frame of her mind in her last moments.

December 27th. Mr. Sloper was ordained at Devizes. The ministers who officiated were Messrs. Phene, Winter, Jameson, Brewer and Bishop. I was desired to point out the duties of the pastoral office, which I endeavoured to do, but was so deeply affected with my dear brother's confession, delivered with so much godly simplicity and sincerity, that I could not perform it with that order and regularity I could have wished.

1781. May 15th. Was attacked with a violent fever, which threatened to carry me off in a short time. It is generally supposed that I took cold in going out to pray over the grave of a person I buried last Sunday evening, after preaching to a crowded audience, and being very warm. There is a scrupulous particularity in many to have a prayer at the grave; but surely it can be of no importance whether it be pronounced within doors or without. If I fall a martyr, let it be to the souls of the living, and not to the bodies of the dead.

May 20th. Have this day resumed my pleasing work of preaching salvation to sinners, but find myself very weak.

December 25. We have kept Christmas as we think most congenial to the design of its institution, and the character of Him whose birth we celebrate: viz. not in carnal feasting and profane mirth, but in feasting on the word of God, and in holy joy. We had preaching as usual; and I trust we had more real happiness than if we had spent the day in rioting and drunkenness. Wisdom's ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace.

1782. February 8th. This being appointed by government for a general fast, the preceding evening I attempted to show the people the nature and design of a Christian fast, from Matthew vi. 16—18.

August 4th. Received in five members. Another applied to be restored, but we judged it necessary for him to wait some time longer, as he does not seem to have profited sufficiently by the censure of the church.

1783. May 28th. Attended Mr. Stevenson's ordination, who is settled in the Independent Meeting in Trowbridge. He gave in an excellent confession of faith.—May the Lord make him abundantly useful to that people.

1784. December 24th. Died our dear friend Mrs. Turner. I was with her, and witnessed the sweet composure with which she departed. Her complaint was a dreadful cancer in the breast, which she bore with exemplary patience. She had some imperfec-

tions, but many excellencies. She was extremely liberal in her sentiments, of which some persons endeavoured to take advantage, labouring to draw her away to their opinions. She was zealous for inward piety, and practical religion; but rather too positive. Having been greatly carried away by dress and gaiety in her younger days, she would scarcely allow of any thing that had the appearance of ornament. Though suspected of being inclined to Arminianism, she has often acknowledged to me, that her doctrinal sentiments were entirely Calvinistic. In short, she was a most excellent Christian, and died renouncing all dependence on her own works, and triumphing in the Saviour alone.—May my latter end be like her's.

1785. Wednesday, January 5th. At the interment of our dear friend, Mrs. Turner, I preached by her desire from the words—"I am nothing;" which were fully expressive of her real sentiments and experience. According to our usual custom, all the members of our church followed the corpse to the grave; and I suppose there were not less than forty ministers of different denominations present. A vast concourse of people was gathered together.—May many of them be led to consider their latter end, and to copy the example of our deceased sister.

January 23d. Having been greatly solicited to publish Mrs. Turner's funeral sermon, I have been this week occupied in endeavouring to recollect the particulars, as it was delivered entirely extemporary; and also in composing an elegiac poem on the occasion, as a token of my sincerest regard.

May 15th. Approving very much of the late institution of Sunday-schools, I have endeavoured for some time to establish one among ourselves; and we have now about two hundred and fifty boys and girls; and as it was found inconvenient to intermix them with the congregation, we have erected a gallery at one end of the meeting, which they took possession of this morning; and it was very pleasing to see what a difference there is between their appearance now and when they were playing about the street, and breaking the Sabbath.—May the Lord own and bless this laudable institution.

September 18th. When I came home from preaching, I was informed that the weavers were rising round the country, and intended to come and destroy all the looms of their masters. As I live at a little distance from the town, it was concluded to come to me first. Many of my friends were greatly concerned for me, and we waited up till one o'clock next morning; but being much fatigued by preaching three times, I determined to go to bed, and leave ourselves in the hands of a merciful Redeemer; but happy was I in reading in the family to open at the third Psalm. This was so suitable throughout, and so comfortable, that I went to rest with entire confidence.

1786. August 27th. My wife was delivered of a fine boy; both likely to do well.

October 1st. In the presence of the congregation, I solemnly devoted my dear infant to the Lord by baptism.—O! may he baptize him with the Holy Spirit, and make him meet for the enjoyment of himself for ever.—We called his name John.

1787. January 4th. I endeavoured to describe the office of a watchman, from Ezekiel xxxiii.—O! may I begin the year with an humble dependence on my God, to enable me to discharge this important office with faithfulness. The work people are again in a riotous state; which, as I am a clothier, and have much to do with them, creates me a deal of uneasiness. It is very difficult to know how to act. Surely, the working poor should have every encouragement; but it cannot be right for them to dictate to their masters, and threaten to destroy their property and their lives.

May 19th. We have this day experienced a most afflictive providence. It has pleased God to take from us our dear little boy; and the stroke seems the heavier, as it was sudden and unexpected; and he was our only child.—O! might it have the desired effect of showing us the uncertainty and unsatisfactoriness of every thing here below, and of setting our hearts more entirely on those things that are above.

November 29th. My wife was brought to bed of another son, which seems somewhat like my late Isaac being raised from the dead—but his mother is so extremely ill, that I almost despair of her life.—Many have been my afflictions this year, but I can also say, great have been my consolations. The rioting of the weavers—the death of my child—my own painful illness—the troublesome and litigious conduct of those who sold me the spot of ground for my new dwelling house—and now the dangerous condition of my wife; but yet I bless God, one portion of his Holy Word has been my support through the whole. It is in my beloved Psalm lxxi. 20, 21. *Thou who hast shown me great and sore troubles, shalt quicken me again, and shalt bring me up again from the depths of the earth. Thou shalt increase my greatness, and comfort me on every side.*

1788. January 13th. Met to regulate some disorders that have crept in among us, and to insist on a stricter attendance at the Lord's table; and also to choose an additional deacon to assist in visiting the poor and the sick, as our number is so greatly increased. All was conducted with harmony and decorum.

February 3d. Baptized my child in the presence of the congregation, and called him by the name of his deceased brother, John.

1789. December 15. Slept for the first

time in our new habitation. O may it prove a Bethel, and may it be our resting-place till He is pleased to remove us to the house not made with hands!

1790. January 3d. Preached from Psalm xxiii. 6. Surely, I may apply these words to my own experience: goodness and mercy have followed me: goodness in all the benefits I have received, and mercy in all the afflictions I have endured: goodness in supplying all my wants, and mercy in forgiving all my sins: goodness from God my creator, and mercy from God my redeemer.—These have followed me as constantly as my shadow. These have been with me in every condition —all the days of my life—in helpless childhood, in giddy youth, in manhood, and I doubt not will be to old age: and may this be my determined and unalterable resolution—to dwell in the house of the Lord, to enjoy, and serve and praise him for ever. Amen.

1791. Being now nearly forty years old, I judge that I have fully reached the meridian of life, and perhaps must henceforth expect to find my remaining years declining towards the grave: but O may I never decline from the ways of God. He has been very gracious to me hitherto, and, I doubt not, will preserve me to the end. It is thy presence, O my God, that alone can support me under the infirmities of declining life, and it is this that must give a relish to all my enjoyments. May the remainder of my days, whether many or few, be entirely devoted to thy glory, and the service of immortal souls. Amen.

June. As the Lord has been graciously pleased to establish my health once more, I think this summer to visit the villages round this neighbourhood, where I have formerly preached the word. There are many in these places that will not be at the pains of coming where the gospel is regularly preached, whose curiosity may lead them to go and hear what a babbler may say. I would therefore wish to accommodate myself to their prejudices, hoping that God may bless it to their souls.

July. As our church is now grown pretty large, and I find that I cannot attend to every thing myself, I proposed to choose a few of our most discreet members to assist me, to inquire into the state of the church from time to time, that we may keep up its discipline, and consult about measures for its prosperity. I therefore called a meeting for the purpose; and six persons were approved and chosen. We have agreed to meet an hour once a month, viz. on the Tuesday evening before the sacrament.

1792. November. My mind has been much hurt of late, by finding that a spirit of disaffection to government is gone abroad among the people of England, in consequence of the revolution in France. May the Lord check the follies of mankind, and give peace in our time!

1793. April 19th being a public fast, we kept it in a very solemn manner. The unhappy spirit of disloyalty and disaffection that prevails too much at present, made the day peculiarly interesting. I preached at seven in the morning: we afterwards went to the parish church. In the afternoon I preached from Proverbs xxiv. 21. "My son, fear thou the Lord and the king, and meddle not with them that are given to change." I found great boldness and liberty. Preached again in the evening. Had a very large congregation each time.

July 15th. Died my brother at Newbury. He is taken off in the prime of life, and has left a widow and two children. To these I must endeavour to be a father, as he has not been very successful in trade, and has left very little property. May the Lord enable me to do a father's part: and may the stroke be sanctified to the survivors.

On a retrospection of the year past, we have great room for gratitude. The Lord has greatly increased our numbers and blessed his word; and much unanimity and kindness reign among us. The losses of our dear friends, who are gone to heaven, have been abundantly made up by the acquisitions of some very pious and useful members.

1794. Our tabernacle being so crowded as to make it very uncomfortable both to minister and people, it has been for some time in contemplation to enlarge. This can only be done by doubling the breadth, which will make it very spacious, and, I am afraid, require too much exertion for me to preach in it constantly; but the Lord can give strength according to the necessity.

June 10th. Began to preach round about in the villages. O that the Lord would give me a heart of flesh and a face of flint, to proclaim his word, and to weep over precious souls.

December 21. I bless my heavenly Father I am greatly recovered from my late illness, and am determined, in his strength, to spend the remnant of my days more than ever in his blessed service, and to his honour and glory.

1795. Being now nearly arrived at my fiftieth year, and having been reminded by my late long and severe illness of the uncertainty of human life, I judge it to be very proper that I should for a moment look back, and see how these years have been spent. But first, undoubtedly, the thoughtless years of childhood and youth must be struck out of the account; very little improvement, though much folly, can be attributed to them. My noblest source of satisfaction is in reflecting that the Lord has honoured me with a commission to preach his blessed gospel; and though few can be more unfit for this important work, yet he has supported me in it, and owned my poor attempts to the conversion of a number of my fellow-sinners, and the esta-

blishment of his people in his holy ways. Much, however, have I to be ashamed of in the many imperfections that have attended my endeavours. That which has occupied the greatest portion of my time has been the management of a large business, in which I have met with many losses and difficulties; yet it has pleased God to give me a comfortable subsistence, and a rich abundance. Many of my intervening hours have been taken up in educating my child, investigating the works of nature, mechanism, poetry, music, gardening, &c. In short, my time has been pleasingly diversified. But has all been done to the glory of God; and may I not say much of my time has run to waste? Yet, O my God, the best hours I have spent in this world have been those in which thou hast permitted a near approach to thyself. These have been my golden moments. O! had they been more! Great room, therefore, have I to be thankful, and great room to be humbled. May I forget the things that are behind, and reach forth to those that are before.

March 29th. Preached a funeral sermon for the wife of one of our members, who, though she never professed much, yet evidenced her love to the Lord and his people by every act of kindness. Her husband was one of those abandoned characters converted at the first opening of our tabernacle; and she has often observed that the ground of her attachment to us was the reformation we had made in her husband, so that she lived with him quiet and happy afterwards. I hope it may be said she also was a partaker of his grace. She always attended the word; and being in a public house, they kept the strictest order, and would not permit any one to get intoxicated.

May 28th. Buried our dear friend Jacob Gaton, one of our deacons, a worthy man and a pious Christian. He died after a very long and trying affliction, which he bore with admirable patience and fortitude. He might be truly said to "have great peace by loving God's law, so that nothing could offend him." It was a pleasure to visit him, and to witness his triumphing over death. In one of my last interviews I hinted to him what a mercy it was to have the great concerns of another world settled before we lay on a dying bed. He replied with great earnestness, "This is the time to spend faith, and not to get it;" and immediately recollecting that the term spend did not seem quite proper, he corrected himself and added, "I mean to use faith, for I know," said he, "it can never be spent." At another time, a person sitting by his bedside said, "Jacob, you will be soon happy;" he answered in an ecstasy, "I am happy already, and am only going to a greater happiness. A death-bed," added he, "is the time to prove the value and importance of religion." The funeral text, chosen by himself was Zephaniah iii. 17. He was one of the nine that joined us first, and has walked steadily and uniformly between thirty and forty years.

1797. September. I am now somewhat recovered, and am able once more to preach, but with much difficulty, and am obliged to be carried. I hope I shall be yet able to call a few more sinners to repentance, if it is my Heavenly Father's good pleasure. But the complaint in my head still continues, and I am afraid, will to the end of my days. Though I have been incapacitated to attend to the concerns of our church this year past, yet I am happy to find that several have been admitted to the privileges of it.—With respect to my own frame of mind, I can truly say that I have found the religion of the gospel to be my only support and consolation. Though I have been excluded from the participation of the outward means of grace, yet my soul has trusted in the Lord, and I am helped.

1798. I have hitherto attempted to educate my child in every branch of useful science, but my health and spirits not permitting me to attend so closely to his improvement as his present age and abilities require, I think it my duty to put him to a master who will do justice to his talents: and I am happy to have found one—a pious clergyman, who keeps only a few boarders, and who, while he is a good classical scholar, is extremely attentive to their morals, and an evangelical preacher.—May the Lord grant that his talents may be improved to the most useful and important purposes. Amen.

1799. As I have been very much confined this winter within doors, I have amused myself in looking over some little pieces of poetry, which were chiefly composed in my juvenile years, together with some hymns, which we have occasionally sung at the Tabernacle; and having been frequently told that they might become a blessing, if made public, I have prepared them for the press, and had them printed. I hope I can say I have done it with a pure motive to be serviceable to the cause of religion in every way I am able.

I am thankful I am one year nearer to my eternal sabbath, where all sin, and sorrow, and weakness will for ever end.

1800. This year I have been very much confined at home; but have been enabled in general to preach at our own place twice of a Lord's-day, and once on a week-day evening, besides expounding a chapter Sunday afternoon—yet I have made some excursions. In August, we visited Weymouth again, and continued there five weeks, where I often preached as I was able.—As I have been sometimes detained in private for a whole Sabbath together, it has afforded me an opportunity of more attentively and experimentally reading God's blessed word; and I find afflictions are necessary to make us understand it.

On one of those occasions, I thought I would regularly read through the whole book of Psalms; and I was surprised to find that there was scarce a Psalm, but in one part or another, exactly applied to my case. I was particularly struck with Psalm lxvi. 10, 11, 12. I have often been brought *into the net* of perplexities and difficulties, in my business, and in my office, as a preacher, and as a pastor: I have had *affliction laid upon my loins* in many painful and dangerous diseases: men have *rode over my head* by their impositions and oppressions; and because I preach the word of God freely, many religious persons have taken occasion to borrow sums of money, and instead of repaying me, have entreated me with the greatest unkindness and ingratitude, judging that I should not have recourse to rigorous methods to recover it, being a preacher of mercy: I have also been *brought through fire and through water;* opposite extremes of trials and temptations; yet I bless his holy name, I have no doubt but he will shortly *bring me forth into* a wealthy place; either making me more useful in this world, or calling me away to a better.

1803. March 1st. I published a little thing called the Christian's Ledger, wherein are contrasted the various texts of Scripture, pointing out what we *are*, and what we are *commanded* to be; and also, what God has *promised* to bestow. May it be useful.

May. Published a little poem, called Novitius; intended to give some friendly hints to young preachers.—O may God condescend to smile upon my endeavours for his glory and the advancement of real religion. I hope I can say my motives are upright. I want no emolument. I have devoted the profit, if there should be any, to benevolent purposes: and as to what is called fame, it is a mere phantom—unworthy the pursuit of any rational being.—O that my poor attempts may be blessed to many when I am incapable of hearing of it; and may the glory be given to him, who is the author of every good and perfect gift.

November. Much complaint having been made of a want of tunes to hymns of a peculiar metre, I composed a few, which we may occasionally use, and in hopes of their being useful to other congregations as well as our own, I published them under the title of the Trowbridge Harmony.

> "O may I breathe no longer than I breathe
> My soul in praise to Him who gave my soul
> All her infinite of prospect fair."

1804. Another thing that requires regulation, is our singing. It was formerly our method for all the congregation to sing the praises of God; and it was performed with much reverence and devotion. But of late years, it has degenerated very much from its original simplicity. A set of persons calling themselves songsters, has by degrees taken upon them the whole of that part of God's service; and the rest of the congregation sit carelessly to listen, as if they had no active concern in it. Besides, these songsters are often falling out among themselves, and frequently sing such improper tunes, that they cause great uneasiness. To obviate these difficulties, I thought the best way would be to make use of an organ, and hearing of a good one to be sold at Bath, I went over and purchased it. It is now delightful to hear the whole congregation uniting as one man in the exercise. My own son and another young gentleman have engaged to play it gratis.

1805. I have been several times seized with such a difficulty of breathing, that I thought I should have expired immediately: especially after my last return from Weymouth; I was obliged to rise at two o'clock, and all my family were greatly alarmed. I expected every instant to depart; but thank God, I was quite easy and satisfied; and seemed to be waiting to have the prison doors opened, and the captive soul set at liberty.—O what a mercy to have all right between my soul and my God in a dying hour.

1806. September 7th. The Lord has seen good to lay me by these three or four months, in a severe fit of rheumatic gout, and a complication of other disorders. Excessive has been the pain and distress which I have felt, yet I hope I can say, the consolations of the Lord have been neither few nor small. The brethren, and indeed my town people in general, have manifested a great deal of kindness and affectionate solicitude for my recovery. It seems very trying to be checked in the midst of my work, which of late has been very pleasant to me; but the will of the Lord must be done; O that I may submit cheerfully to it. I am going, however, to be carried this afternoon to the table of the Lord.——There I met the brethren, and we all wept together for the goodness of God to us as a church, in so far recovering me. Surely the Lord was with us of a truth.

1807. In the course of my late tedious affliction, I have received considerable amusement and gratification in composing a little poem, called the Fortunate Discovery; and which I have since published.

August 12th. Went to Weymouth, and continued there a month. It served, I think, in some measure to strengthen my general frame; but my dropsical complaint is returned again with great violence.

December. Spent a month at Bath, in hope the change of air might be useful; but the weather was so extremely unfavourable, that I could not go out, and found myself worse. As it does not seem probable that I shall ever be able again to fill up my place in the house of God as formerly, I am looking out for an

assistant—one that may be a comfort to me, and a blessing to the people.

1808. January 24th. This being my birth day, and having arrived at what some people call the grand climacteric, I am induced to look back and view how these sixty-three years have been spent. I cannot express myself better than in the words of Dr. Watts:—

> Much of my time has run to waste,
> And I, perhaps, am near my home;
> Lord, grant me pardon for the past,
> And give me strength for days to come.

My indisposition still continues, and my people are obliged to procure various ministers to supply my place.—At length, I trust, we have been happily directed to a person well qualified to take a share with me in the pastoral care of the church and congregation. He seems a man of real piety, and possessed of every other requisite for the due discharge of his important office. His name is Innes, now at Crediton in Devonshire.—May the Lord make him a useful instrument of good, and a lasting blessing to the people.

Mr. Innes preached his first sermon, after which he continued with us some time, and found great acceptance with the people, who almost unanimously invited him to be their pastor and teacher, in conjunction with myself, to which he acceded; and at the same time, they have provided liberally for his support, far beyond my expectations; for all which, the Lord enable me to be thankful. It has relieved me from a great burden, and I hope, laid a foundation for continuing the gospel in that place—so that I can now depart in peace, and with entire satisfaction.

August 21st. I ventured out to God's house this morning, and gave the people an exhortation respecting our dear friend Mr. Innes, founded on the words of St. Paul, 1 Corinthians xvi. 10, 11. "See that he may be with you without fear: for he worketh the work of the Lord, as I also do." After which, Mr. Innes addressed them in a very affectionate manner. They seemed to be much moved, and I hope were greatly edified.

August 27th. Repeated my journey to Weymouth, but the weather proved so very unfavourable, that we did not stay there long, though I think it rather helped to brace up my frame, and harden me against the approaching winter. All the friends at Weymouth were very kind. Before I took this journey, I had the pleasure of hearing the experience of eighteen persons, who desired to be admitted into the church.

October 9th. I assisted Mr. Innes at the Lord's table, being the first sacrament since the taking in of our new members.—O that the great Shepherd may crown all our labours, and bless our souls to his glory.

[*Here end the Memoirs, from which we have made the preceding extracts.*]

REMARKS ON THE CHARACTER AND NARRATIVE.

From the preceding Memoir it appears, that Mr. Clark's health had been for some years impaired and declining. At length the symptoms of his disorder grew more serious; and his friends foreboded the event as at no great distance. But his removal was rather sudden and unexpected. In the morning of the last Sabbath he spent on earth, he attended public worship. In the evening of the day on which he died, a friend called upon him, and remarked his cheerfulness and composure: he replied, "I enjoy a solid peace, and have not been suffered to doubt the safety of my state during all this affliction, and for years before." He performed family worship himself—it was the last time—he prayed with peculiar impressiveness, like one who was at "the gate of heaven." Then taking leave of his friend, he said, "Perhaps we may not meet again on earth, but I trust we shall meet in heaven. I might have died long ago. I may not die for some weeks. I may die this very night. But, blessed be God, let it come when it will, all is well with regard to the soul and eternity." He retired; and, when in bed, again expressed his sense of the divine goodness, that "all, all was well." Shortly after which he literally and figuratively "fell asleep." Nothing could have been more easy or tranquil than his entrance into the "rest that remains for the people of God."

Thus from the termination of his written account to the period of his dissolution, only a few months intervened; and they were months of inability for public service, and of bodily sickness and pain. During this season nothing occurred worthy of remark, but the exemplary manner in which he bore his privations and afflictions; and the familiarity and satisfaction with which he looked forward to the hour of his release. His experience and conversation in circumstances so trying, and in prospect of an event so awful and important, were peculiarly interesting and edifying. I never withdrew from his presence without exclaiming, "Thus, if called to it, may I suffer." "Let me die the death of the righteous; and let my last end be like his."

In our monthly religious obituaries there is too great an insertion of at least *one* kind of peaceful and happy deaths. I mean those

deaths—*with* which the life has no correspondence—*for* which it is no preparation—and *of* which it yields no reasonable hope. The Scripture does not countenance the expectation of such a frequent discordancy between the way and the end; between the character of a man while in this world, and his transition out of it. And though we should always endeavour to do good, and never limit the Holy One of Israel, it becomes us in many instances to rejoice, not only with trembling, but with silence; and to remember that the evidences which encourage us, must be from the very nature of the case dubious; that "light is sown for the righteous, and joy for the upright in heart;" that we are to "fight the good fight of faith," in order to "lay hold on eternal life," and to "run the race set before us," in order to "reach the prize of our high calling;" and that the frequent exhibition of careless, worldly, wicked lives being closed with a work of grace, will have a tendency to prevent a salutary fear, and to keep alive a presumptuous hope. God forbid we should exclude, however vile, any of our fellow-creatures from mercy, even at the eleventh hour. We do not. But it may strike some with wonder to observe how commonly—may I not add invariably, even malefactors, when visited by a certain order of good men, finish their course, if not with the triumph and exstasy of martyrs, yet with a confidence and joy far superior to those of thousands who have long followed the Saviour in the regeneration. Now admitting, as we most cheerfully and gratefully do, the possibility of a real change of heart, in some of these examples, yet surely it would not be amiss if many of those who profess to experience it, discovered a little more penitence, as well as assurance; and many of those who record it displayed a little more caution as well as zeal.

To return to the place from which we may seem to have digressed; in Mr. Clark the way and the end, the life and the death harmonized. To live was Christ; to die was gain. He had been distinguished by a long course of dependence upon God, of communion with him, of devotedness to him. He evinced a remarkable steadiness and consistency of character. He was early called to a knowledge of the truth, as it is in Jesus; and from the commencement of his religious career to the close of it he was uniform. Observed at twenty, at forty, at sixty; seen in public, in private, in single life; examined as a son, a master, a husband, a father—he was the same; harmless and blameless; holy and spiritual—no other difference being discernible than that which results from increase and progression. For "the path of the just is as the shining light that shineth more and more unto the perfect day."

What an interesting object to contemplate is a man who not only begins well, but ends so; who, moving through a world like this for near seventy years, is steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord; who is neither discouraged by difficulties, nor flattered by seducing prospects to abandon his course, or even to relax in it! How many apostacies and declensions has such a man witnessed while he has held on his way! How often have his principles been reduced to proof, and how often has he practically said, "Yea, doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord!" Such a man gains esteem and confidence: his enemies and his friends are possessed of a thousand pledges of the part he will act in any given circumstances: he is a tower-man, he has passed the mint, and circulates unquestioned and approved: he is "blessed," for "he is tried, and receives a crown of life"—and the Judge of all, as he puts it on, says "Thou hast borne, and hast patience, and for my name's sake hast laboured, and hast not fainted." Such a man is here presented to the public.

A prejudice has sometimes been excited against early conversions; but an enemy has done this. Surely it is reasonable to conclude, that where God intends a man should gain much or do much, he will dispose him to begin betimes. Surely it is not without cause that he has said, "I love them that love me, and they that seek me early shall find me." And the eminent servants of God recorded in the Scriptures, and the numberless examples that have adorned the church of God down to a Winter, and a Clark, will, I hope, be sufficient to disprove the wretched proverb, that "young saints make old devils," and give rise to a juster one, "that young saints make old angels."

While we acknowledge the insufficiency of a dry and barren orthodoxy; of cold and speculative opinions, that leave the heart unimpressed and the life unsanctified; no opportunity should be omitted of remarking the importance that ought to be attached to an enlightened understanding and a sound judgment. And, it would not be difficult to prove, how materially the adoption of definite and fixed views of the doctrines of the gospel affects, if not the safety, yet the excellency of the individual. Decision and firmness, even when they rather partake of obstinacy, connect much more advantageously with dignity and usefulness; than levity, and fickleness, and change. That which is firm may be rendered fundamental; but who can build on sliding sand? A double minded man is unstable in all his ways. He can never be a character. Character is the result and fame of habits; habits are formed by actions; and actions that are uniform and constant enough to produce them, must issue from some strong

principle—the man cannot be versatile in the bias of his feelings, or of his views. The firm reception of, and adherence to, a class of sentiments, even allowing the system not to be perfectly correct, (a concession that ought to be extended to every system, but that which is contained in the Book of God) is preferable to a state of hesitation and uncertainty. For this state of mind, though it may in some cases be excused, and in some, for awhile, be even commended, generally springs from evil, and leads to it. It reflects on revelation, which being designed not only for important but immediate use, is doubtless intended to be plain. It discredits the truth of the promise—"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven;" —"The meek will he guide in judgment, and the meek will he teach his way." It causes us to lose the advantage of truth under the constant apprehension of admitting error; keeps every thing unoperative, because undecided; and employs in search, the opportunities given for use and employment. I can never suppose, that the scripture designed to applaud the free inquiry and liberal minds of those who are represented as "ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth." Men the most distinguished and serviceable in the cause of God, have been the reverse of this vagrancy of mind; they had their leading sentiments early and firmly fixed; their "hearts were established with grace;" and though they improved much, they varied little. And this was the case with the man of God we are reviewing. He never found it necessary to change those principles which he felt perfectly adapted to his state as a sinner, and his experience as a saint. He discerned and embraced the truth at once, and without delay, began to enjoy it—to walk in it—to profess it—to diffuse it: and hence the complexion of his future life.

I am far from wishing to represent Mr. Clark as perfect. We have no such characters in the biography of the scripture; and when we meet with them in other works, we feel ourselves trifled with, if not insulted. We have fable given us instead of fact. Such characters are imaginary. Even the grace of God, while it produces the Christian, leaves the man. I should not furnish a just view of the subject of this narrative, were I not to observe, that he had a disposition, which to an unusual degree, was retreating and reserved. To this may be fairly ascribed several of the little blemishes occasionally noticed in him. We are prone to run into extremes. The generality of ministers, as well as of females in our day, are not in danger of excess in "being keepers at home;" but in the case of the deceased, home was, perhaps, too attractive and engrossing. He seemed to draw solitarily, rather than as a co-operator with others. He rarely met with his brethren in their associations, or attended any of their public services. He too rarely saw his own people, but in the house of God, and in the hour of affliction; he had too little intercourse with his neighbours and friends; he stood too much aloof from general society.

Here it may be necessary to observe, that while religion disposes us for retirement, it prepares us to leave it; and that many of its duties call us, not out of the world, but into it. A Christian, says our Lord, is a candle; and "no man, when he hath lighted a candle, putteth it under a bushel, but on a candlestick, that it may give light to all that are in the house." And adds he—"Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven." Ye are my witnesses, says God. As such, they are subpœned to *appear;* and they are not to be absent when called upon to depose. Many a testimony has been lost, by the Christians withdrawment from his place, as well as by his cowardly fear and shame when he is in it.

It is possible, therefore, that the abstraction enjoined upon us in the Scriptures, may lead us astray; and there is peculiar danger of this, when it falls in with a recluse temper. It is very conceivable, that many find solitude much more inviting, and free, and pleasant, than society. Moses, doubtless, found it a greater privilege to hold communion with God in Horeb; but it was his duty to descend, and endeavour to guide and govern a faithless and perverse generation, through the wilderness to Canaan. Peter wished to remain in the transfiguration with his Master, and Moses and Elias—but "he knew not what he said." From the irreligious maxims and manners of the world, we are absolutely to retire, and thus practically bear our testimony against them: but the demand does not extend in the same way to our social intercourse with themselves. This it indirectly and conditionally forbids. This we are only to avoid when there is danger of infection, and no prospect of doing good. And even with regard to these, we are to remember—that we may be secured from contagion, if we take our preservatives along with us, and venture only at the call of God, and with a single eye to our duty: and—that there are opportunities and ways of being serviceable by a well regulated intermixture with others, that some cannot or will not discern. We should, therefore, guard not only against every thing that looks uncivil, but unsocial in religion. Though we are to discover a peculiar regard to "the household of faith;" "as we have opportunity, we are to do good unto all men." They have claims upon us as fellow-creatures, citizens, neighbours. The Saviour died for them; and it is not the will of our Father, who is in

Heaven, that one of them should perish. If we are in the possession of a benefit that at present they are unhappily destitute of; are we to be proud, as well as thankful! are we to feel, and act as if we considered them excluded and reprobate? Or as those, who are encouraged by the mercy bestowed on them, to invite others from their own experience, and to say—"O taste and see that the Lord is good—blessed is the man that trusteth in him."

By keeping at an ungracious distance from those around us, we seem at least to regard them as the Jews did the Gentiles, unworthy to come in contact with so peculiar a people: we seem to say "Stand by thyself, come not near to me; for I am holier than thou." Hence as they will judge by us of our religion—our religion will acquire, in their minds, a contemptuous and repulsive aspect, and the reaction of such a sentiment, cannot but be injurious and lamentable.

Nor is this all. A man may move sufficiently in a state of society, and yet prevent all the usefulness of which he might render himself capable. It is only for him to imitate some of those beautiful and amiable examples with which the professing world in too many districts abounds. Let him only display the arrogance of spiritual pride; the censoriousness of superior orthodoxy; the captiousness of theological controversy; the rudeness and rancour of malevolence called faithfulness; the self-conceit, and positiveness, and intolerance, and insolence of those who *see things clearly;* the evangelical pharasaism, if I may be allowed a perversion of language, of those "who trust in themselves that they are righteous, and despise others;" and the work is effectually done. Who would ever wish to be religious with such specimens of religion before his eyes! Who would not deprecate the conversion of sinners, if they were to be converted by such saints as these!

It is to be lamented that many, who are in a great measure free from these incurable evils, do not attend sufficiently to the apostolical maxim, "Walk in wisdom towards them that are without." But some few there are who, along with inflexible integrity, possess the secret of moral attraction. They discover such a sympathy in their afflictions, such a concern for their welfare, such a readiness to serve them, as seldom fails to impress and interest those who neither think nor worship with them. They not only differ, but even censure, without producing resentment or alienation. They can drop hints so gentle and well-timed as not to disgust; so derived from circumstances and events as to appear natural and undesigned; so judicious in their application as to exemplify the proverb "A word fitly spoken, O how good is it; it is like apples of gold in pictures of silver." They study the educations, connexions, habits, prejudices and temperament of the individuals with whom they have to do. They shun every tendency to angry dispute, while they are "always ready to give to every man that asketh, a reason of the hope that is in them with meekness and fear." They know that the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God;" and therefore in meekness "instruct those that oppose themselves."—They do not press what their connexions at present are not prepared to receive; but endeavour to improve what is admitted and acknowledged, and which in due time will make way for more. Instead of assailing every thing that is wrong, they commend and cherish every thing that is right. They expel evil by introducing good; and banish error by presenting truth: and thus the friend acts without assuming an opposition that may render him in appearance a foe. They tear not the votaries of the world from their pursuits by violence, while their hearts would mourn after the interdicted delights; but they wean and allure from dissipation by substituting other engagements, and pleasures more rational and satisfying; and are therefore careful to exhibit "whatsoever things are lovely and of good report;" and to render religion as desirable as it is necessary; as "having the promise of the life that now is, as well as of that which is to come."

Such conduct is not the sacrifice of principle, but the judicious use of it. It is prudence, considering the quality of its materials, as well as its work; varying its means to compass its end; conceding to gain, and yielding to conquer. It is not the cowardice, but "the meekness of wisdom." And though this wisdom is never perceived in its operation, and seldom acknowledged even in its useful result, by blind and furious bigots, "it is justified of all her children." Was there ever a more steadfast friend to truth than Paul? Instead of betraying the cause he espoused, he nobly fell a martyr to it. But what says he? "Though I be free from all men, yet have I made myself servant unto all that I might gain the more. And unto the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews; to them that are under the law, as under the law, that I might gain them that are under the law; to them that are without the law, as without law, (being not without law to God, but under the law to Christ) that I might gain them that are without law. To the weak became I as weak, that I might gain the weak: I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some." "Even as I please all men in all things, not seeking mine own profit, but the profit of many, that they may be saved."

It may be necessary to touch another article of some importance in the Christian life. Habits of frugality may easily pass the line

of duty, and enter the province of the neighbouring vice. People are often in hazard from this quarter, without apprehending it. Their religion teaches them to regard moderation as a virtue; and their circumstances perhaps require the practice of rigid economy even to "provide things honest in the sight of all men." What was originally necessary, continues when it is no longer indispensable. They who have felt the worth of property by the want of it, are apt to remember the worth when it is no longer wanted: and as they advance, not only shun extravagance, but that becomingly enlarged and liberal mode of livelihood which will not suffer "their good to be evil spoken of." For if a Christian, especially one of the stricter class, denies himself many things which his condition allows, he must be largely generous and beneficent, or his profession suffers: his privations will be considered the offspring of niggardliness, or sacrifices to mammon.

But as habits of frugality and economy may very possibly be perverted and misrepresented; so the degree of beneficence practised by many of our fellow-christians cannot be easily ascertained. When, with regard to county, we consider how much *ought* to be, and how much *may* be private; how many cases of distress come under the notice of another, that never strike our own; how diversified the views of charity are, as well as its objects, and that those who do not walk with us may do good in their own way; it becomes us, in this as well as in many other instances, to remember the admonition "Judge not, that ye be not judged."

It has been supposed, even by friendship, that if Mr. Clark required the exercise of candour any where, it would be here. How far it is needful I cannot determine. From personal observation I was never impressed with the deficiency. But I can suppose, that his abstracted life cut him off from many objects, which by striking the eye would have affected the heart; and that the full employment of himself in a large business, in literary pursuits, and constant preaching, left him little leisure and opportunity to explore affliction in person. I can imagine, though I do not wish to justify the effect, that having constantly had so many of the lower class manufacturing for him, he might have had blunted, by all the wickedness he witnessed, something of the fine edge or humanity that many of those feel, whose intercourse with the poor and wretched is only occasional and charitable. I know, that so conscious was he of the important duty of liberality, that he enjoined his dearest friend, if she judged it proper, to extend relief on any application, even should he himself at the time seem to be disinclined or adverse to it. He was not only the tender, but the kind relative; and amply proved himself "a friend to the fatherless." He even purchased the place of worship in which he so long employed himself, and of private property made it public, by putting it into the hand of trustees; and also secured provision for a considerable endowment in aid of the future support of divine worship there. The sums expended for this purpose alone were more than one thousand pounds. When it became necessary to have an assistant and a successor, that would require a salary; he set his people an example by a very handsome annual subscription. The profits that might arise from any of his publications, he previously consecrated to benevolent purposes. He bequeathed considerable legacies to the Bible, the Missionary, the Hibernian, and Tract Societies. And what was his whole life? Was it not completely disinterested? "They that sow spiritual things should reap carnal things:" "and the labourer is worthy of his hire."* It is an ordinance of God, as truly as baptism or the Lord's supper; "even so hath God *ordained* that they that preach the gospel should live of the gospel." But, like Paul, our friend always waived his privilege; not only in the infancy of the church, but when they were able to remunerate his services: and for all his labours he never received one mite. He could say without a fear of contradiction, "I seek not yours but you. I have coveted no man's silver or gold, or apparel; yea, ye yourselves know that these hands have ministered unto my necessities, and to them that were with me." Many may be equally disinterested and unsecular in the sight of God, who cannot appear so in the view of men: but it is a singular advantage when the proof can accompany and illustrate the principle.—What could have carried a man forward, not only without repentance, but with delight, in so many ways, and for so many years, without the prospect or the wish of any emolument—yea, at the expense of substance, ease, friendship, fame? What was it that led him to subordinate worldly business and the pursuits of science to his public work? What led him to resign the figure he might have made as the gentleman and the scholar, for the sake of preaching in places and circumstances the most revolting to human pride, at the risk of health and life?

To those who were ignorant of the nature and force of the principle that actuated him, his conduct, doubtless, appeared mysterious or insane. But neither their ignorance, nor their reproach, could make him swerve, or pause. He could not but speak the things that he had heard and seen. He was a wonder unto many: but he did not view them with contempt. He pitied them; he prayed for them. And though he did not think it

* Mr. Clark somewhere strikingly says,

Must not, you'll say, a preacher, then, have bread;
And feeding others, not himself be fed?
—'Tis true: but here a difference we conceive—
Some live by preaching, and some preach to live

necessary to apologize, he explained, in language canonized by one who had a larger share of the same spirit: "For whether we be beside ourselves, it is to God: or whether we be sober, it is for your cause. For the love of Christ constraineth us, because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead: and that he died for all, that they which live, should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again."

There are few, especially among the moderns, who will bear any comparison with the deceased in point of *activity*. In labours he was more abundant. He was in season, and out of season. He knew that souls were perishing for lack of knowledge, and that his opportunities of saving them from death, were limited and uncertain. He spent "the day"—it is called no more;—not in idleness, or wavering resolves, but in exertion; for he saw "the night coming wherein no man can work." Is it possible for a preacher to read his narrative? Is it possible for him to reflect how often he engaged in public and in private? In how many places he proclaimed the word of life? The quantity of fresh ground he broke up—and all this under the engagements and perplexities he felt from secular concerns—and not be ashamed or—inflamed by it?

His labours were distinguished by their *usefulness*, as well as by their greatness. His preaching laid the foundation of many religious societies in the surrounding neighbourhood. But to Trowbridge we principally look for evidence that he did not "run in vain, nor labour in vain." Beginning with three or four individuals in a private room, we behold him at length at the head of a congregation of considerably more than a thousand people on the Lord's-day, eager to hear the gracious words that proceeded out of his mouth. What a number of converts will be his joy and crown "in the day of the Lord Jesus." What a number of souls encompassed the mouth of his grave, and by their tears acknowledged—"There lies the man that turned my feet into the path of peace." "My father, my father, the chariots of Israel, and the horsemen thereof."

Other ministers have gone to churches already formed and established, but he had to form and establish one. Some plant, and others water, but he planted and watered, though it was God that gave the increase. Some lay the foundation, and others rear the building, but he laid the foundation, and with united patience and zeal, from time to time, added "the lively stones that grew unto an holy temple in the Lord." It could not be said to him—"other men have laboured, and ye have entered into their labours." He did not move "in another man's line of things made ready to his hand;" but he could say—"I have strived to preach the gospel, not where Christ was named, lest I should build on another man's foundation; but as it is written, To whom he was not spoken, they shall see; and they that have not heard shall understand."—Thus he practised himself, what in a poem he has recommended to another:—

> Be you no party-man: but strive to bring
> *New* subjects daily to your heav'nly King.
> A gospel preacher should be apt to teach,—
> And where the gospel is *not* preach'd—to preach.

Mr. Clark was a man by no means deficient *in literature*. He had been early placed at a good grammar school, where he made proficiency in the Latin. He became also familiar with Greek and Hebrew. He had a very strong attachment to the arts and sciences through life. Mechanics, astronomy, electricity, chemistry, music—these were his delight, and employed the moments he could save from his secular and sacred engagements. In music he was a good performer on several instruments. He was also a composer; and published a volume of tunes, which were revised by a very skilful hand. He had a soul formed for melody. Besides an organ in the Tabernacle, he had two in his own mansion—one in a large stair-case, surrounded with a gallery prepared to receive it; and one in another apartment, which was entirely of his own construction, as well as a spinnet, and a violoncello. Many curious and useful works remain as proofs of his delight and ingenuity in mechanism. I cannot imagine that I am sinking a biographical sketch, in mentioning things like these, especially in *such* an example. Knowledge of every kind is ornamental and valuable. The skill of Bezaleel is noticed by God himself as one of his own gifts: "I have filled him with my spirit in wisdom and in understanding, and in all manner of workmanship: to devise cunning works; to work in gold, and in silver, and in brass, and in cutting of stones, to set, and in carving of timber."—It may be proved from the case of Mr. Clark, that evangelical and serious religion is not, as some suppose, necessarily combined with rudeness, and dullness. He was not a gospel savage. In his dwelling, in his gardens, in his walks; taste and elegance were seen leading along piety, who instead of churlishly refusing their offer, accepted it with a smile, and walked hand in hand with them. You were cheerful without being vain; and serious without being sad: you were instructed and improved, while you were attracted and charmed. On a large sun dial, another work of his own hands, you saw *Pro tempore tantam*. On the front of one of his own made instruments, you read *Manu, Ore, Corde*. On an apparatus which he formed to exhibit the

revolutions of the celestial bodies, "The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament showeth his handy work." And here I cannot omit a circumstance which is characteristic of the man, and serves to show how knowledge may be rendered useful, even in a way of charity. In the time of the scarcity of corn, in addition to what he gave himself, he devised this kind of orrery, and lectured at the tabernacle on astronomy; and obtained, by tickets of admission of half-a-crown each, a considerable sum to distribute among the poor.

None that knew him will deny that he was a man of *great ingenuity*, and endowed with *superior talents*. This, I allow, is not easily inferred from his own memoir. In writings of this kind there is an established mode, from which it would seem there is to be no deviation. Even those who are capable of improving it, are restrained by custom, or some unaccountable principle; so that the degree of genius they possess, instead of actuating their piety, is chilled and checked by it. Hence all religious journals are precisely alike. They tell something, but omit that which we are most anxious to know. We see indeed the goodness of the man, but not the individuality. We view the mind, but it is through a strait and contracted passage, like the pendulum of a clock through a circle of glass, in the body of the frame: we see it is going, but all the motion we observe, is vacillation. We have repetitions of the same feelings, and the same phrases. A work of this class might be rendered, by a man of talent and remark, as well as devotion, a very interesting, a very instructive, and a very useful publication. Mr. Clark had made one improvement. He did not keep a *diary*, but wrote a *weekly* retrospect; and did it in the silence and sacredness of the sabbath-day morning. But it must be confessed this is all; and I have witnessed more intellect from him in one hour's conversation, or in one of his free addresses from the pulpit, than I found in going over all these papers. He had a fine imagination, that seldom failed to furnish him with the most happy allusions and illustrations. He was able to simplify and bring down to popular apprehension, almost any train of thought. He had a facility in varying a few well-known truths, so as to give to sameness the effect of novelty. He could derive materials for his public discourses from the most common objects and occurrences. He studied men and things rather than pored over books: hence in his sermons there was the freshness of nature rather than the mechanism of art: and thus while engaged in business, he was not only able to preach, but to attract and keep large and constantly increasing audiences. Though he never thought of studying oratory, his address was easy, and fluent, and correct; and though his discourses were not mode d after the forms of the schools, they were so affectionate and experimental as always to excite interest and attention: and they who heard, could not but listen to addresses, which they knew sprang only from a concern for their welfare, and which, instead of flourishing in abstract theory, and general declamation, touched *their* case, and expressed *their* pains and pleasures, hopes and fears: addresses which were always adapted to break a whole heart, or to bind up a broken one.

To conclude: He was an *original* character. There was a class to which he belonged, but he was unique in it. He associated attributes rarely found blended in the same individual. It would be easy to exemplify this assertion.

—Here was a man full of diffidence and reserve, yet distinguished by active exertion; shrinking from private company, as much as Cowper, and yet apprehensive of no difficulty or danger in his public work, and seeking after opportunities to make known the savour of the Redeemer's knowledge in every place.

—A pastor, yet in trade; a minister of uncommon zeal, yet attentive to business, and acquiring affluence.

—A preacher, fixing upon his subjects in the place of worship, and deriving them from the chapters he read, yet never obliged to leave off or to talk nonsense by going on; always extemporaneous, yet never without order; and generally seizing a method as natural as it was prompt.

—Connected originally with no denomination, and shunned by the rigid of all parties; yet at length gaining the good-will and warm approbation of every neighbouring minister and congregation; and departing under their blessing and regret.

—Preaching out of the church, and giving rise to dissenting congregations; and yet attached to the establishment, not only at first, but to the end of life,—and not only as to its doctrine, but its liturgy and forms.

—Principally labouring among the poor and common people; often preaching without doors in the streets and hedges, and passing with many for a fanatic; yet a man of substance, countenanced by persons of eminent character and reputation in their day,* fond of elegant learning, pursuing philosophical experiments, passing his leisure hours in leading forward his son in every branch of knowledge:—his study exhibiting scarcely

* To mention no more: The late celebrated Dr. Stonehouse, as appears from the Memoir, more than countenanced him when he preached without doors in the vicinity of his living. And the Rev. James Roquett, of lamented memory, curate of St. Werburgh's, lecturer of St. Nicholas' churches, and chaplain of St. Peter's Hospital, Bristol; also chaplain to the right honourable the earl Deloraine; opened his chapel, and preached several years on the anniversary of the day.

a religious publication, and only containing works of literature and scientific apparatus.

Who can help seeing, therefore, how prone we are to err in judging of men by outward appearance, by common circumstances, by the class in which they usually rank. From every general rule there are exceptions. In every community there are characters, that must not be measured by the ordinary standard. Indiscriminate reflections are always foolish and unjust. Many, whose ignorant and illiberal minds are now asking, "Can any good thing come out of Nazareth!" would be astonished if by accident they were to associate for a time with individuals of the bodies they censure in the mass; and if they could know them personally before they were informed of their canton or their clan, they would value them, they would be attracted towards them, and find a thousand points of amiable and useful contact, where they would otherwise suppose there could be nothing but dissimilarity and mutual repulsion. What pleasure and advantage are often lost in neighbourhoods by the prevalence of prejudice, that keeps wise and worthy men at such a distance as to prevent their appreciating and loving one another. Surely if certain distinctions are deemed necessary in the present state, and restrict professional exertions; they need not forbid personal esteem and intercourse.

And to take a higher view.—As the subjects of divine grace, under all the denominations that distinguish us, we belong to one family; and are, therefore, much more intimately related, than the votaries of any party can be united. If I am a real Christian, whether an episcopalian, a dissenter, or a methodist, I am your brother in the highest sense God himself can affix to the term: hence you are not at liberty to determine how you shall feel and behave towards me: you are bound to love me; and without this love, your religion is a dream. "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye love one another." "We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren." Are we advancing to a world, where, it will not be inquired by what name we were called, but whether we "walked in newness of life:" not whether we served God in a particular place, but worshipped him who is a spirit in spirit and in truth? Should we not endeavour to rise, and approximate this state? Must not a preparation for it consist in a resemblance of it? Should we lay more stress on that which is ready to vanish away, than on that which is destined to be eternal, and is therefore infinitely superior in importance?

If God has promised unity among his own followers, we have reason to believe that it has been accomplished. But we see men equally led by the spirit of God, and devoted to his will, differing from each other on numberless subjects. So it always has been. And so it always will be. Religion is not injured by it: nor has the Scripture spoken in vain. It never intended any thing more than unity with variety; an accordance in great things, and difference in little ones. If communities or individuals pursue an uniformity of opinions, ceremonies, discipline, forms and modes of worship, they are first seeking that which is *impossible:* for the attempt has been fairly made, and has proved useless: men may as well be constrained or persuaded into an uniformity of stature—of complexion—of temper. And secondly, they are seeking after that which would be *unprofitable.* The advantage lies in the present state of things. The cultivation of such dispositions, and the practice of such duties, as the exercise of humility, forbearance, self-denial, candour, and brotherly love implies, are far more valuable and useful than a dull, stagnant conformity of notions or usages.—It is awfully possible for persons to be very strenuous about the "mint, anise, and cummin," while they neglect "the weightier matters of the law;" and to contend for the forms of godliness, while they are destitute of its power. Indeed these are commonly proportioned to each other. The best way to moderate an undue zeal for the external and circumstantial appendages of religion is, to impress the mind more fully with the spirit and the substance of it. As we regard serious and important things, we shall be drawn off from trifling ones: our time will be occupied; our attention will be elevated; our views will be enlarged.

Let me conclude the remark in the language of a man, who was peculiarly qualified to speak on this subject, having so amply illustrated in his preaching and in his life, the happy combination of liberality of feeling, with firmness of conviction; of friendly intercourse, with attachment to order; of tolerance in little things, with zeal in great ones. "The true unity of spirit," says the incomparable Mr. Newton, "is derived from the things in which those who are taught and born of God agree, and should not be affected by those in which they differ. The church of Christ, collectively considered, is an army; they serve under one Prince, have one common interest, and are opposed by the same enemies. This army is kept up, and the place of those who are daily removed to the church triumphant, supplied entirely by those who are rescued and won from the power of the adversary, which is chiefly effected by the gospel ministry. This consideration should remind ministers that it is highly improper (I might use a stronger expression) to waste much of their time and talents, which ought to be employed against the common foe, in opposing those who, though they can-

not exactly agree with them in every smaller point, are perfectly agreed, and ready to concur with them, in promoting their principal design. A wise statesman, who has a point much at heart which he cannot carry without assistance, will gladly accept of help from persons of all parties on whom he can prevail to join with him; and will not, at such a crisis, preclude himself from this advantage, by an unseasonable discussion, of more minute concerns, in which he knows they must, and will be against him. When I see ministers of acknowledged piety and respectable abilities, very busy in defending or confuting the smaller differences which already too much separate those who ought to be of one heart and of one mind, though, while they are fallible, they cannot be exactly of one judgment; I give them credit for their good intention, but I cannot help lamenting the misapplication of their zeal, which, if directed into another channel, would probably make them much more successful in converting souls. Let us sound an alarm in the enemies' camp, but not in our own!—I have somewhere met with a passage of ancient history; the substance of which, though my recollection of it is but imperfect, I will relate:—'Two large bodies of force fell in with each other in a dark night. A battle immediately ensued. The attack and the resistance were supported with equal spirit. The contest was fierce and bloody. Great was the slaughter on both sides, and on both sides they were on the point of claiming the victory; when the day broke, and as the light advanced, they soon perceived to their astonishment and grief, that they had been fighting, not with enemies, as they had supposed, but with friends and allies. They had been doing their enemies' work, and weakening the cause they wished to support. The expectation of each party to conquer the other, was founded upon the losses the opponents had sustained; and this was what proportionably aggravated their lamentation and distress, when they had sufficient light to show them the mischief they had done.' Ah! my friends, if shame be compatible with the heavenly state, as perhaps, in a sense it may, (for believers, when most happy here, are most sensibly ashamed of themselves,) shall we not even then be ashamed to think how often, in this dark world, we mistook our friends for foes; and that, while we thought we were even fighting for the cause of God and truth, we were wounding and worrying the people whom he loved; and perhaps indulging our own narrow, selfish, party prejudices, under the semblance of zeal for his glory?"

—Again. Is it possible to read such a narrative as the foregoing, and not see the falsehood and infamy of reproaching men of Mr. Clark's sentiments as Antinomians, or even as persons who lay very little stress on the practical part of the gospel? If they are ministers that urge the scandal, I would say —"Candidly examine these materials. I do not expect you to approve of every thing you meet with; but distinguish things that differ. Observe what an attention from the beginning and throughout Mr. Clark paid to the *moral* character and conduct of the members he admitted; and when under no sway, but the influence of his own principles; principles which he knew required such sanctity, and would produce it when properly embraced." I would say—"Bring forward your own standard of practical religion, and let us see its elevation and purity. Are all those clean who bear the vessels of the Lord with you? Would one instance of intoxication lay aside an official character in your community? Would smuggling exclude from the Lord's table with you? Would domestic broils suspend a member from your communion, till the force of reproof was felt, and the justice of it acknowledged?"

But it seems to demand an apology to notice such cavils, and which I fear oftener originate in malignity than in ignorance. When good men, crucified to the world, and labouring to serve their generation by the will of God, are alarmed, they deserve attention and explanation. They really value the interests of holiness and good works: and it is desirable to remove their fears, by showing them, from reasoning and from facts, that their pious apprehensions are groundless. But where persons give no evidence of their regard for the glory of God, or the welfare of man; where they worship nothing but "the god of this world" all the week, and on the sabbath express *their* regrets and fears—we feel very differently. They cannot be in earnest; their complaints and clamours are railings or pretences. What are holiness and good works to them? We are here reminded of another objector; who with a sad face and a pitiful voice exclaimed, when he saw Mary's zeal, "Why is this waste? Why was not this ointment sold for three hundred pence, and given to the poor?" An ignorant by-stander would have supposed that his heart was full of compassion. But he who knew what was in man, tells us "That he said this, not that he cared for the poor, but because he was a thief, and had the bag, and bare what was put therein."

—Mr. Clark knew and preached the importance of faith; and it was impossible for him to say more in honour of it than the sacred writers have done before him. But what did he include in his notion of faith, and what did he connect with it? An extract from one of his hymns will justly express his sentiment:

That we are saved by faith alone
God's holy word asserts;
But *pride* the doctrine will disown,
And *wickedness* perverts.

An empty notion some profess,
And think they now believe;
As if to see, was to possess,
To know was to receive.

—But those who most themselves deceive,
And sure destruction win,
Are such who boast that they believe,
And yet are slaves to sin.

—Faith is an all-subduing power,
All-purifying grace;
Of holiness brings forth the *flower*,
And *fruits* of righteousness.

I wish this circumstance to be the more remarked, not only because the reflections to which I have alluded have been uncommonly spread and patronized of late, but also because there was nothing in the form and government of this society that was peculiar. Whatever little difference there may be in other things, with regard to *this* subject, the narrative is but a fair specimen of the attention paid to the religion of the individuals *when admitted*, and as *long as they are continued in all* the churches of the orthodox dissenters and methodists. It is not pretended that all these members are unfeignedly pious. There is no guarding against the intrusion of hypocrites into any society, however strictly constituted or administered: but moral character and conduct are essential to membership: and it is surely sufficient to exonerate a body of people from reproach, when its adherents as soon as they are detected are disowned.

—Let those also look over the memoirs of this man, who suspect that in certain societies a great deal of disaffection to government is always secretly working and cherished. What seditious practices will they find in the proceedings here related? What of a dark and a suspicious nature will they discover in any of these public or private meetings? If they pronounce the exercises in which these deluded creatures engaged foolish, they cannot say they were dangerous. They were not of a political character or tendency. If ever these people and their minister had a reference to public affairs, it was purely religious; it was for the purpose of humiliation and prayer; and while many of their enemies were drinking, and swearing, and defaming, to show their loyalty, they were individually and conjointly mourning over the sins of the land, and supplicating the throne of grace for protection and deliverance.

By inspecting these papers a man may see how Christian societies are formed, where nothing but toleration is expected from the secular power. He will see that in these communities there is nothing compulsory; all is founded in conviction, in choice, in spiritual friendship. He will see that the calling of the Christian does not sacrifice, but ratify and sanctify the rights of the man.—He may compare these societies with the primitive churches, when no system was established or endowed. He may observe the adaptation there is in them to diffuse themselves, and to multiply; their fitness for missionary exertions; their simple, unperplexed, unembarrassed mode of operation in evangelizing a heathen country. He may compare them with the profit of the individuals composing them —with the injunctions of Scripture to watch over one another, to consider one another, to provoke one another to love and to good works —with the admonition of the apostle, "Comfort yourselves together, and edify one another, even as also ye do." "Warn them that are unruly, comfort the feeble-minded, support the weak, be patient unto all men"—with the exercise of brotherly reproof, the support of discipline, the purity of the Lord's table, and our Lord's rule—"If thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone. If he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as a heathen man and a publican."—He may take occasion from hence to inquire, whether there is any thing like mystery in church government. He may ask whether it was necessary for the Scripture to frame any particular or definite system upon the subject. He will see whether the influence which the gospel supplies, and the general laws it lays down, are not sufficient to guide us in all circumstances; and whether, as where there is no law there is no transgression, any injury can result from different administrations, varying with times and circumstances, and equally allowing of communion with God and social edification.

But some may be ready to ask what authority had such a man to preach at all? And the question is easily answered.—With regard to his own people; their choice and approbation.—With regard to the country in which he resided; the law of the land acknowledging, sanctioning, and protecting his labours.—With regard to God; command, inclination, capacity, opportunity, success.

Some things are usually, and some things are usefully, connected with the ministerial office, that are by no means inseparable from the essence of it. Mr. Clark was not regularly inducted, nor had he an academical entrance. We are far from despising order; or supposing that learning is of little importance. Institutions established to prepare men for their public work, are of great utility; and as God has, in the course of his providence, furnished our churches with them, we would earnestly recommend, that those who are encouraged to give up themselves to the minis-

try of the word, should avail themselves of the advantage. At the present season we should the more urge it, not only for the invaluable benefits derivable from them, but to suit the character of the times, and the state of many congregations, in which mere zeal would not, as formerly, secure attention; and also to keep back many, who, as one justly observes, while they declaim against *men-made* preachers, are fond enough of *self-made* preachers, and go forth with no advice but from their ignorance; with no consultation but with their own presumption, by which so many settled ministers have thorns planted in their nests, and schisms formed and upheld in their neighbourhoods.

Of old in Israel, there were "schools of the prophets," from which God generally took his servants: and thus he honoured the use of means. But he occasionally called a messenger from a different condition; and by endowing and succeeding him, showed that he was not bound to the use of them. And he does the same now. He gives us rules to go by; but he will not confine himself. While he discountenances the fanatic, he can pour contempt upon the formalist; and teach those who love means not to idolize them. And when he produces exceptions, the circumstances will justify them; and the general rule will be confirmed rather than invalidated. It should therefore be remembered, that Mr. Clark was a man of education and knowledge: he had been prepared for his work, though in a peculiar way; and made every source of his improvement contribute to aid his public work.—It will be well if some of those who deny the validity of his claim to the office he filled, are able to produce the same number of seals to their ministry as we have reason to believe will authenticate his: or, as all who are alike called, are not equally successful, if they are happy enough to hear the same commendation—"Well done, good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord." While many differ about trifles; while they are disputing how the work shall be done, and who shall do it, and do nothing; such a man as this steps forward, and bears the burden and heat of the day, and is dismissed to receive a reward dispensed by a rule too frequently overlooked: "They that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness, as the stars for ever and ever." Solomon tells us "He that winneth souls is wise." And our friend, in admonishing a young minister has said—

> Seek to be useful more than to excel;
> Who does his work effectual, does it well.
>
> —Whatever curious critics may commend,
> Sure that's done best that answers best the end:
> And preachers would be gainers on the whole,
> To mar a period, and to save a soul.

But was not Mr. Clark an enthusiast? Define the term, and we shall be able to answer. If you mean by enthusiast, a man that pretends to new revelations from Heaven, and governs himself by impulses regardless of the written word; if you mean a man that takes it for granted he is a favourite of Heaven, and riots on high in the privileges of the gospel, negleetful of the low claims of duty and common sense: who consults his imagination instead of his judgment; who, void of humility and caution, never supposes himself fallible—never doubts his rectitude or his wisdom, and therefore never pauses or inquires: who only thinks of his mark, but never examines the road he is to go, or the ground he is to tread: who is indifferent to the rationality of his conduct, insensible to the proprieties of life, and so engrossed with a favourite point as to resemble a man walking in his sleep, naked and staring, yet feeling and seeing nothing but the dream that inspires and disturbs him.—

—If this is to be an enthusiast, Mr. Clark was unworthy of the name—no person could pass a day or an hour with him and not be convinced of this. Such a man would never have placed as a motto to one of his works the aphorism of Young.—

> Reason pursu'd is faith: and unpursu'd
> Where proof invites, 'tis reason then no more.

Or have given to a preacher such advice as this:

> And if in public you would useful be,
> Make use of all you hear, and all you see.
> Observe men's tempers, weaknesses, complaints·
> You may improve by sinners and by saints.
> To learn from fools and idiots condescend;
> And on your brethren's labours oft attend.
> What you in them approve e'er make your own,
> Still imitate the best, but mimic none.
> Let every science your attention prove;
> And to converse with humble Christians love.
>
> —Then study nature, nature best will please,
> What comes from nature always flows with ease.
> —Sound authors too with profit may be read:
> But still the Scriptures are the fountain-head.
> Yet ever search them with unbiass'd mind,
> Take them, not as you wish, but as you find:
> Nor seek to bend, and thus profanely choose
> What only suits your predetermined views;
> Or act the part of that prepost'rous fool
> Who rashly dyed his pattern to his wool.*

Is the following too, the language of a wrong-headed enthusiast? or even of a man who has more zeal than knowledge?

> —Fickle professors you will also find,
> Who change about with every turn of wind;
> From place to place, from sect to sect they stray,
> As fancy, or as interest leads the way:
> The last with them is right, all else condemn'd,
> All truth's within their present party hemm'd:
> Bigots to any sect that suits their will,
> And change they ne'er so oft are bigots still.
>
> —With real Christians too you've much to bear,
> Those are not always wise, who are sincere:
> Their tempers, manners, likings often clash,
> Some too remiss you'll find, and some too rash.

* Alluding to the folly of a man, who being employed to dye a furnace of wool to the colour of a pattern, not being able to bring the wool to the colour of his pattern, in order to make them match, put the pattern into the furnace with the wool.

And when a conscientious man goes wrong,
He's hard to turn—his prejudice is strong.
Much wisdom, therefore, you, my friend, will need,
To judge between the motive and the deed:
To show a just severity to sin,
And yet with tender love th' offender win.
—Of love unfeign'd to all the pattern give,
And teach with meekness, and with meekness live.

Those doctrines preach that prove your Maker just,
And bring the haughty sinner to the dust.

Set forth th' experience of the christian man,
And urge obedience on the gospel plan.
Of "legal preacher," never fear the cry,
Or ought, to please a sickly taste, deny.
The *pious* hearer will your plan approve,
And edify by all your work of love.

But cav'ling coxcombs you can ne'er content,
Though pure your doctrine, and your zeal well spent:
Such pow'r to mortal man was never giv'n;
Nor could an angel, though sent down from heaven.

It surely ill accords to deal in strife
While you are dealing forth the bread of life.

Some make the pulpit like the wrangling bar;
The vehicle of peace, a seat of war:
But scolding in a sermon, with hard names,
No good will cherish; but it oft inflames.
Then you, O man of God, let these alone;
By setting up the truth, pull error down:
Like arms of a true balance, one must drop
Just in proportion as the other's up.

—But what makes christian discipline so rare?
Our christian churches are not what they were.
In former days, the shepherds led their sheep; [keep:
Taught them what paths to shun—what paths to
To go before their flock was then their pride;
But now, too oft, the sheep their shepherds guide.
Church management is rated too by pay,
And pride and passion love to bear the sway:
A spirit of democracy prevails,
And thus authority and order fails.
—As all the world acknowledge the same sun,
In former days all churches were but one:
A general cause they all combin'd to make;
If one dismiss'd, the rest refused to take.
To gain most members now each party strives,
And by the loss of other churches thrives.
To excommunicate no way alarms,
Some other church receives with open arms.

But what accession does religion gain
By these divisions and distinctions vain?
Has Christ in his true church one member more?
Or is the man more holy than before?
Does it not oft'ner minister to strife,
And draw th' attention from the christian life?——

—But if by enthusiasm is intended the application to divine things—of that energy, that fervour of mind, which, it is supposed always attends genius, and is essential to distinction in the arts and sciences: if, as a term of reproach, it is to decry a man who gives religion the most decided preference to every rival claim; who feels such a powerful devotedness to it, that difficulties rather increase than diminish his attachment; who is so alive to its excellency that he complains more of his defects than of his proficiencies; who is so united to its welfare, that he sympathizes in all its varieties, and rejoices or weeps with it—who is so governed by it, as to make it the centre of attraction, the end to which he renders every thing subordinate and subservient; I would say—How is it that a term generally used with approbation, should become in a particular case ignominious? Why should warmth be allowed and admired in every other subject, and condemned in that which beyond all comparison deserves and justifies it? Why should it not only excuse but extol the painter and the poet, and degrade the Christian, whose objects and pursuits are as superior to those of all other men, as the soul is more valuable than the body, and the heaven is higher than the earth! I would inquire—Whether it is possible to consider religion as important at all, without regarding it as all-important? Whether we can have fairly weighed eternal things against temporal, unless we see that there is no proportion between them? Whether we are required in the Scripture to attach ourselves to God a little, or to "love him with all our heart, with all our mind, and with all our strength?" Whether we are to obey him partially and formally, while the heart is far from him; or we are to be fervent in spirit while serving him? Whether that moderation which some so highly applaud, as adjusting precisely the medium between being too little religious, and righteous over much, and which attempts to reconcile and to satisfy the due claims of the world and of conscience, is not the very thing the word of God brands as most incompatible with our Christian profession? "So then, because thou art *luke warm*, and neither *cold* nor *hot*, I will spue thee out of my mouth." In the latter sense of the word, Paul was an enthusiast. He felt such a commanding interest in the cause of the Redeemer, as gave an unity to his active and diversified life, and produced that excellency in his Christian profession for which he is commended by many, who yet ridicule every practical approach to it in others. In this sense too, Mr. Clark deserves the honourable reproach. But justice requires that we make one concession. It regards some of Mr. Clark's thoughts and expressions, which, in appearance, at least, and especially when presented to those that knew not the man, are exceptionable. There is, perhaps, nothing in the narrative that he could not have explained rationally and satisfactorily, had opportunity been given him: but as they now stand, there are several things that deserve notice, and I shall speak freely.

With regard to the remarkable circumstance mentioned in a preceding page, and by which he was encouraged to go on at a moment when he determined to renounce preaching, I shall hardly hazard an opinion. I leave it to the judgment of the reader, and conclude that it will be viewed variously. It may be proper however to remark, that I was unwilling to admit the marvellous part of the event, till I had fully examined the case; fearing that some crude and ill-informed religionists are occasionally tempted to trench slightly on the demands of honesty and truth, to carry points for the glory of God! But in this instance, every character stood fair; and I am fully persuaded from what has come

under my investigation, that there was no collusion, and that there could have been none. The fact is as well authenticated, as the overruled result of it was happy and useful.

Mr. Clark, in a preceding page, speaks of his going to preach at some place; and tells us that "He ventured to trust entirely on the promised assistance of the Holy Ghost; and without any previous study or arrangement of the subject, preached from Mark xvi. 16." And adds, "This I was enabled to do with so much ease and comfort to myself, and satisfaction to the audience, that thenceforward I never made use of any notes; but was enabled to cast myself entirely on the divine goodness." Here we presume is an allusion to the promise given by our Saviour to his disciples, and which has frequently been mistaken and abused:—"When they deliver you up, take no thought how or what ye shall speak; for it shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall speak. For it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you." Here it may be proper to observe: first, that the text has no reference to preaching at all; as appears from the words preceding:—"But beware of men: for they will deliver you up to the councils, and they will scourge you in their synagogues. And ye shall be brought before governors and kings for my sake, for a testimony against them and the Gentiles." Secondly, if it had such a reference originally, the justness of the application in the present instance would be questioned. Modern ministers are not apostles. The miraculous and ordinary assistance of the Holy Ghost are very distinguishable. There is nothing that as preachers we have to be inspired with. We want ability to communicate what is already revealed, and to impress it upon the hearts of our hearers: and God forbid that we should ever think mere study, or reasoning, or eloquence can succeed in securing the objects of the Christian ministry without "the ministration of the Spirit." But if "the preacher be wise," as Solomon remarks, "he will find out acceptable words, as well as words of truth:" he will see that activity and dependence, instead of being incompatible, require each other; and that instrumentality, so far from excluding agency, supposes it. In this case, the advice of Paul to Timothy is worthy of our regard. Timothy was ordained "according to the prophecies which went before on him," and possessed extraordinary qualifications and assistance—yet says his zealous, but judicious admonisher, "Give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine." "Neglect not the gift that is in thee." "Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them, that thy profiting may appear to all;" or as it is in the margin, in "all things."

Knowing Mr. Clark's views, I am certain he did not intend by the expression he used, all the meaning some will attach to it: nor would he plead for any thing like inspiration according to the common acceptation of the word. But here is a mad enthusiast:—here is a young unfurnished preacher, who takes up the memoir, and justifies his ignorance, his incapacity for thought, his idleness, his love of gossipping by an expectation of divine and immediate assistance. I think Mr. Clark, as far as he could have acted otherwise, erred: but before we exculpate another as far as we justify him, let the imitator be as obviously called to preach, let him be as much and as unavoidably engaged, let him possess the same education and talents, the same fancy and fluency; let him also be equally devoted to general improvement. For Mr. Clark—and it is but just to observe it, after mentioning that he preached habitually without writing or premeditating his sermons, adds, "I considered, however, that this by no means excused me from studying, in a general way, God's holy word, and wonderful works; but rather enforced the necessity of it so much the more, that I might lay up a stock of things, new and old, ready, when called, to bring forth to the public. My business also being with persons of different descriptions, especially the working poor, gave me an opportunity of knowing the real manners of men, and seeing more into the depravity of human nature. My philosophical researches also, to which I was exceedingly attached, served to enlarge my ideas of things as well as of men." I would also observe, that Mr. Clark, unlike too many of this class, was never heard to censure those who preached in a way different from his own. He exceedingly enjoyed the labours of his brethren, and not only commended their services, but the preparations for them. "In the following lines," says he in the preface to his Novitius, "the reader may trace somewhat of the method which the author himself has been led to adopt; and which he hopes it has pleased God to own, to the conversion and edification of many.—But he would be far from limiting his brethren in the ministry to any particular method: let every one consult his proper gift, and employ it in the best manner he is able—but all to the use of edifying. Some have a brilliant imagination, some a solid judgment, some a fluent utterance, and some a strong memory. I censure none but those who bury their talent, and those who misemploy it; those who seek to please themselves; and those who seek to please men." In the same liberal strain, are the following lines from the work itself:

—Next for your study might I drop a hint?
With no dull rules would I your genius stint.
Some preachers are with fertile fancies bless'd,
To rove at large, o'er nature, suits them best.
From every object they can catch a theme,
And the whole universe their study deem!

Others there are more moderate limits keep,
Their subjects fewer, but they dive more deep.
In either case retirement may befriend
To methodize the thought—the language mend.
But study too intense brings many a grief;
It dulls the spirits—makes the manners stiff.
Too studious, some their native ardour damp
With massy volumes, and the midnight lamp:
The frame 's enervated, too much confin'd;
And gloomy vapours overspread the mind.
But you, Novitius, take the middle course,
Nor be remiss, nor yet your genius force:
On no one study too intensely fix,
But exercise and air discreetly mix
Should you prefer to preach extempore,
You may be less correct, but much more free.
This was the way our good forefathers taught,
Till, learning scarce, illit'rate men were sought:
Now learned doctors keep the custom still,
To ease their sloth, or else to show their skill.
—To preach by notes can be no sin indeed,
Or read your sermons if you find you need:
But wherefore then should you conceal the book,
Or look on it as if you did not look?

—An honest, warm effusion from the heart,
Must sure exceed the nicest forms of art:
—Ideas will spring up as you go on,
And honest zeal for many faults atone;
Thoughts new enkindled set your soul on fire,
And heavenly eloquence your tongue inspire.

—But though your doctrine should be e'er so sound,
Doctrine unfelt is seldom useful found.
Not at the head take aim, with notions dry,
Nor o'er the head let useless bullets fly
Of learned lore; but level at the heart
Your whole artillery, and strike that part.
And from *your* heart, O send them burning too,
For balls red-hot most execution do.
If in the pulpit you appear unmoved,
Your sermon does small good, howe'er approved.
Yet do not rant enthusiastic stuff,
How weak no matter, so 'tis loud enough!
But temper zeal with wisdom and with love,
So men shall profit, and your God approve.
—Then for your language, be it chaste and pure,
Above contempt, though level to the poor.
Yet not in phrases quaint, and vulgar speech
Attempt to play the buffoon, but to preach.
Know that your place a dignity demands,
For in God's name a gospel preacher stands.
—A striking simile you'll sometimes find
T' illustrate truth, and fix it on the mind:
Or with an anecdote attention move,
Lest dull monotony an opiate prove.

—Nor yet, my friend, affect the orator
In pompous diction, sounding metaphor.
Disguise not truth, proud eloquence to nourish,
As school-boys lose the letter in the flourish;
Enticing speech may loud applauses gain
From shallow hearers, and make preachers vain;
A feather this to tickle itching ears;
But 'tis warm truth must melt a soul to tears:
'Tis this, when aided by th' Almighty arm,
Will wonders work, and miracles perform.

—Whate'er your subject be, let heavenly zeal
And love to souls direct your method still:
Nor let strict rules, which pedagogues may teach,
Divert you from the end for which you preach.
Method, we grant, is proper, but 'tis cold,
If not attended with a pathos bold.
In nice particulars to waste your time
When souls are perishing, account a crime.
Some preachers cut the bread of life so small,
The greater part does through the basket fall:
All their divisions subdivided yet,
'Twere task enough the numbers to repeat;
So full of heads that nothing else there seems—
No room is left for body, life, or limbs.
—Some, day and night upon a subject pore,
And rack invention till it yields no more;
To show how much they can bring forth at will
From a small text, and thus display their skill:
Whate'er the text, the sermon still must be
A little body of divinity.
These in the study quench that ardent fire
Which in the pulpit should their souls inspire;
Exhausting so their subjects when alone,
That when they bring them forth, the savour 's gone.
—Nor less, my friend, should you bethink your time,
While in a work so useful, so sublime.

Sweet is the gospel, and it well beseems
To dwell with rapture on its glorious themes;
Yet some discourses would be full as good
If they were more compress'd in latitude:
They lose in substance what they gain in length,
As thread spun out too fine impairs its strength.
—Some are more garrulous the more they're lost,
And when they've least to say, enlarge the most.

I hope I need not apologize for the insertion of these extracts. They contain important hints, many of which are expressed in language that shows a considerable talent for poetry. They are, therefore, specimens of the kind of composition in which the author delighted. They also deliver his sentiments with regard to preaching; and will serve to qualify some passages in the memoir. They fully prove, that while he pleaded for ease and fervour, he did not oppose propriety and decorum. And surely it ought to be inquired, whether many of his strictures are not just; and whether all the evils to be dreaded are found on one side of the question, and nothing is to be apprehended from the opposite extreme? If the whisper could only be heard by *some*—we might suggest—Whether there is not an over-doing, as well as an under-doing? Whether habitual thought is not commonly preferable to the appointment of particular times for study? Whether general meditation is not more advantageous than textual reflection, which, while it gives a man skill in dividing and explaining words and phrases, adds but little to his intellectual stores?

A man who is always attentive and observing; who is well versed in general knowledge; who has amassed ideas upon every subject on which he is called to teach; who has rendered himself very familiar with the language of Scripture; and who speaks out of the abundance of the heart—such a man will rarely be at a loss, or preach amiss. His thoughts will easily find their proper places, and suitable language will clothe them, if he does not consume that enormous quantity of time expended by some in their sermonic preparations, to the injury of their health, and the neglect of social duties. In all other cases, where men have similar qualifications, we are not afraid of every thing they deliver on the spur of the occasion, or conclude that it must be incoherent and foolish.

We more than once in the narrative meet with a casual presentation of passages of Scripture, and a seasonable occurrence of admonitions or promises on which some considerable stress was laid. I do not remember indeed any incongruous application of this kind; and Mr. Clark had too much wisdom to be led into any improprieties by such a sanction—Yet it must be confessed, the practice is perilous; and I have known many cases in which it has been very injuriously indulged. The text read, or recollected just at the time, has determined the person as to

the state of his soul, or the path of duty: it has operated to the removal of his distress, or the solution of his doubt. But though all the Scripture is true in itself, many parts of it may be erroneous in their application to the present case of any individual. The suitableness of the part occurring, is commonly supposed to prove that it is immediately from God: but this suitableness is the question; and the man who decides it, is the party interested, and therefore the most liable to mistake. The will of God may really call us off from a pursuit, when by this means the word of God is urging us on. Jonah probably was encouraged when he came down to the sea side, to find a ship just ready to sail: when a man is in a wrong course, a piece of Scripture unexpectedly met with, may keep him much in the same way. The angel of the Lord commissioned Gideon to go and deliver Israel as he was threshing wheat: a man engaged in the same work feels an inclination to go forth and preach, but has some little doubt as to his sufficiency and success —when lo! these words came to his mind, "Arise, for the Lord is with thee thou mighty man of valour:" and his doubts are scattered like dust before the wind. A pious female meets with an eligible suitor, but has some conflict between inclination and conviction, founded on religious character: but she is resolved to yield, by opening the Bible, and casting her eye on the admonition, "Arise therefore, and get thee down, and go with the men, doubting nothing: for I have sent them."* A person thinks of engaging in some enterprise; and it may be his duty not only to undertake it, but to undertake it immediately: but he is determined by the address of our Saviour suddenly starting into his mind, though not originally delivered quite on a similar occasion, "What thou doest, do quickly." I have read of a good old man who used to exhort people to live by the ten commandments, and not by impulses: and he used to tell how he got free from delusion himself. When he was a lad, he was poor and pious, and thought that all suggestions in scripture style came from heaven. Walking in the field in want of fireing, by the side of a neighbour's hedge, he wished for some of it to burn: instantly the word came—*In all this Job sinned not*, and in faith of this, he began to make free with his neighbour's wood. But happily he discovered his error; tried the application of the text by the command—*Thou shalt not steal*, or, as the ingenious relater remarks, the word of God might have led him out of the church into the jail.

After all, this is only specifying the danger on one side, though it is by far the most common side. But the word of God has awful passages; and there are persons of a melancholy temperament, or labouring under dejection from temporary causes. Such persons, by a principle of association, are always prone to attract towards themselves every thing of a dreadful nature. What wonder, therefore, when a threatening of Scripture strikes the mind in such a case, if the man viewing it as a divine intimation, is plunged into distraction or despair. We cannot love the word of God too much, nor consult it too often. But we are to "*search* the Scripture;" and it is "to dwell in us richly in *all wisdom*." We are not to turn it into a kind of lottery, or to use it as a spell, or a charm; but to "understand what we read." We are not to take it separately, but connectedly: and if we would be directed by it as to our duty, or satisfied by it as to our state, we are to peruse its contents with diligence, humility, and prayer; to observe the passages that refer to persons of our character or condition; that describe the temptations to which we are exposed, or the trials under which we labour. In this way we shall find that the word of God is not only designed, but calculated for general and perpetual use, and has such an infinite affluence in it as to subserve "*all* things that pertaineth to life and godliness." Whether we are rulers or subjects, masters or servants, parents or children, husbands or wives: whether we are young or old, rich or poor, it lends us the most appropriate assistance; and is "a lamp unto our feet, and a light unto our path."

I most cordially subscribe to the doctrine of divine influence, not in the lax sense in which it is admitted by all that make any pretensions to religion; but in the stricter meaning of the word. I believe that all good is derived from, and perpetuated by, the agency of the Holy Spirit. Yet this doctrine is frequently expressed by preachers and writers in a way that is not perfectly just. Every thing is referred not efficiently, but immediately to God. We are wrought upon, not employed. We are passively blessed, not actuated to exertion. The means which idolatrously keep some from the God of all grace, are too much discarded by others. The motive in many cases we are aware cannot be too much praised; as it is designed to secure the glory of God. But if it needs not to be purified, it requires to be enlightened. It should be remembered, that God does not operate less really, because he operates instrumentally. The means are his own, as well as the success of them. And the production of an effect by a series of means, deriving their operation and their being from God, instead of detracting from his glory, displays it, much more than a sudden result without any intervention. The

* Let no one object that the passage is not *quite* the thing: the difference between the singular and plural number; between *him* and *them*, is nothing in these sublime cases: for the greater includes the less: and trifles cannot be seen when we soar

one is a volition of God—the other an action. The one proves his omnipotence—the other shows also his wisdom and his condescension. The one astonishes—the other instructs. The one requires nothing—the other calls for prayer and obedience.—We are not wrought upon in religion as masons' work on stone, or as carpenters' on wood; we are rational and moral subjects: God works by setting us to work; he "works in us to will and to do of his good pleasure." *He* does not repent, but he enables *us* to repent: *he* does not believe, but he enables *us* to believe. He not only works in us, but even by us. He does not give me wisdom, without making me wise: he informs me; and while he is the teacher, I am the learner. I am not *carried* forward like a man asleep in a ship: he leads me, he aids me: I cannot go a step without him, but *I go* with him. In doing good, I am not moved by mechanism, but motive. Renewing grace does not destroy the order, the subordination, the use of our spiritual powers, but restores them, establishes them, sanctifies them.

There are some who seem to view the means of grace as mere tests of obedience to the will of God; as mere arbitrary expedients, which however used, leave it perfectly uncertain whether any advantage can be derived from them. We are to regard them as a way in which we are to stand, in case God should go by and leave a blessing; not as a road leading to an end which we certainly and naturally approach, if we walk on in it. The labours of the husbandman are vain without the divine blessing: but there is a vast difference between his sowing flints, and his sowing corn: a crop, by the influence of Heaven, not only attends the seed, but grows out of it: the means of grace have a passive suitableness in them; they are adapted to do us good by their very nature; and the blessing is made to flow from the use of them, as well as to be obtained in it. They are not spoken of in Scripture as experiments; nor should we employ them just to try, whether it be *possible* to gain any benefit: the promise is more encouraging—"Blessed is the man that heareth me, watching daily at my gates, waiting at the posts of my doors." "Then shall we know if we follow on to know the Lord." "Ask, and it shall be given to you. Seek, and ye shall find. Knock, and it shall be opened unto you. For every one that asketh, receiveth; and he that seeketh, findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened."

We may here also notice the doctrine of divine providence. We believe in its universality and minuteness. With men an attention to little things prevents an attention to great things; and an attention to great things prevents an attention to little things. But it is otherwise with God. The heaven of heavens cannot contain him; but he condescends to dwell with man upon the earth. He wings an angel, and he teaches the spider to weave his web: nor can it be unworthy of him to sustain what was not beneath him to create. There is dignity as well as truth in the language of our Saviour; "a sparrow falleth not to the ground without your Heavenly Father; yea, the very hairs of your head are all numbered." Yet I do not think we are justified in accustoming ourselves to such phrases as these, "The Lord broke my leg;" "The Lord set my house on fire;" "The Lord blighted my apples."

Nor are we friendly to many of those expressions which seem to intimate, that the Lord often steps out of his ordinary course to indulge us. It savours of self-importance, while the acknowledgment may really issue from gratitude. Our speech should always be with grace; but it should be *seasoned* only with salt. The frequent use of the name of God, connected with things by no means uncommon or peculiar, but which have hereby an air of wonder and mystery given them, produces in religion the effect of the mock-heroic in poetry: and may not only diminish veneration, but excite ridicule. For things that are the same with regard to God, are not so with regard to us.

In reference to any event in life, we are more than authorized to say, "If the Lord will:" but it is the sentiment that renders the diction valuable: and as the mind may feel the sentiment when the lips are silent, so the tongue may utter the words, when the mind feels nothing: yea, the individual may even render the language more than insignificant: it may become "as the body without the spirit," which is not only dead but disagreeable and offensive. I have heard of a preacher, among a certain class of Christians, who were formerly much more renowned than they now are for disturbing the audience by their frequent and noisy assents in prayer. Conceiving that it was generally, at least, an idle, unmeaning usage, in order to convince them, he said as he was going on in his devotion, "Lord, take me immediately to heaven:" by the force of custom, "Amen" was kindly exclaimed from many a worthy brother and sister, that would have been shocked at the thought of wishing him dead. And I knew a clerk, who was very conscientious in giving out any intimation from the desk, who once said, "There will be no preaching here next Thursday, *God willing*."—But "a preacher should be sparing of his smile;" and never indulge it to expose, but to rectify. I wish to be understood. It is not habitual piety we oppose; it is not the introduction of it into all our concerns; for whether we eat or drink, or whatever we do, we are to do all to the glory of God. But it may be proper to suggest to some, that as

there is "a form of godliness," so is there "a form of knowledge," and "a form of words;" that genuine religion deals more in things than in terms; that it induces us to be more concerned for the reality than the appearance of devotion; that though we cannot be righteous over-much as to principle and disposition, we may as to ostentatious display, untimely exertions, and irregular actings out of our place and beyond our power. A Christian, like the sun, is to do good, not by noise, but by shining; he is to operate principally not by his tongue, but by his life; by the consistency, the holiness, and the charms of his example. "For so is the will of God, that with well doing ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men." "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven."

A man should study the dispensations of Providence. "Whoever is wise, and will observe these things, even they shall understand the lovingkindness of the Lord." But of the events befalling us, two views may be taken.—First. These events may be very distinguishing; and our privileges peculiarly great. In this case, though they may be noticed by others, they can hardly be so well announced by ourselves. Humility seems to require the concealment, rather than the exposure. Paul said, if I must needs glory, I will glory in things that concern my infirmities. He had visions and revelations of the Lord; and once he was caught up into the third heaven, and heard unspeakable words. After such a distinction, some would not have been able to contain themselves for a week or a day. They would have gone forth and have said to every one they met; "Where do you think I have been?"—Why "in the third heaven." "And what do you think I have heard?"—Why "unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter." But Paul does not divulge the honour for more than fourteen years—and then he was urged by slander; and mentions it, not in his own praise, but in his own vindication, and to magnify his office in the eyes of those that unrighteously degraded him.—While he is candid enough to acknowledge at the same time, that it had nearly proved too much for him; and that he would have been exalted above measure, but for a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to buffet him.—Secondly. We will suppose these events nothing more than common occurrences. In this case, though they may be worthy of attention and review to the individual himself, they can hardly be interesting or useful to others. Thus, while in the one case publication may be improper, in the other it becomes needless. As things diminish by distance, so they are enlarged by nearness. Here persons are liable to err; and good men indulge in self-consequence without knowing it. A work that appears the offspring of pride, only results from contracted views; from peculiar associations and habits; from a real wish to glorify God. If this be not taken into the account when writings of a certain kind are perused, we may censure the motive, as much as we condemn the execution. I would observe also, that in addition to these circumstances, we should endeavour to comprehend their language. It is to be lamented that many of our authors should use a lexicon peculiar to themselves; but since this is the case, to judge them we must examine it: and yet many have it not at hand. When Mr. Clark says "Such a day I had a call to London;" a stranger to his dialect may conclude that he was referring to some kind of voice, or impulse, or be puzzled to understand his meaning, when all that *he* intended was, that circumstances rendered it his duty.

And here, before I conclude, I would remark the propriety of a decisive and intelligible mode of expression in religious concerns. It is not enough for a man to render it possible to understand his language; he should render it easy: he should endeavour to render it obvious, not only to the initiated, but to those that are without. He knows not who may hear him, or read him beyond his own circle. Some good men are not aware of the injury they have done their cause by the use of certain terms and phrases. Some of these being early met with in a work, have led the reader to prejudge and throw down the book, which he might otherwise have been induced to read to advantage. It is useless for the author to say he was misunderstood; and that the reader appears to have been full of prejudice. Who would use language so dark or so dangerous, that numbers have not views to comprehend or to qualify? A man who has eyes can step over a stone, but who would throw stumblingblocks in the way of the blind?—The figurative language of Scripture has often been rendered very exceptionable. Such words as resurrection, creation, regeneration, or the new birth, are finely applied by the sacred writers to the subject of religion: but instead of taking in the simple reference of the passage, the metaphor has been pushed to excess, and the mistaken declaimer has supposed that whatever is true of the image, is true of the doctrine. Hence, such expressions have been used as would lead many to imagine, that in our renovation we are perfectly passive; hence, some of their readers seem to feel a kind of diabolical acquiescence in their present condition, as if their remaining in it was their misfortune, and not their crime. The same may be said of such declarations as these—"Whatsoever is not of faith is sin." "They that are in the flesh cannot please God." "The prayer of the wicked is an abomina

tion." These, separate from the positions and references which would explain and vindicate them, are often delivered so abstractedly, as to become erroneous and hurtful: men who are not conscious of religion, concluding that all their actions are the same; and that it matters not whether they go to the house of God, or remain at home; employ the Sabbath in reading the Scripture, or the news of the week.—"This is not our intention." Why then incur the danger? Why occasion an abuse which you could so easily escape?

It is worthy of remark, how much of the impression that a very celebrated review aimed some time ago to make against methodism, was derived from this kind of materials. Though we have no reason to believe that the writers in question would be friendly to evangelical truth, however soberly and judiciously explained; yet the weapons they wielded were certainly furnished not so much by the doctrine of the two magazines, as the quaint phrases, the cant terms, the low conceits, the mystical jargon, the spiritual prodigies, the unqualified and abrupt decisions with which, it must be confessed, they have too much abounded. And surely nothing of this was necessary in these publications. As far as the extracts from them contained *real* and *valuable* truth, neither the statement, nor the effect, would have been injured by a different and unexceptionable representation.—There are authors firmly attached to the doctrines of the gospel, and who have written in the illustration and defence of them, that we should not fear trusting in the hands of any class of readers. We do not mean to intimate that they would find nothing but what they approved; but the subject, and not the author would offend: the displeasure would be "the offence of the cross;" it would be the reproach of faith, and not of folly—of the former we should never be ashamed: in the latter we should never glory.

The reader will perceive that I have wandered a little in some of these remarks; and that much of what I have advanced applies but very partially and indirectly to the worthy author and subject of the memoir we have reviewed. But from inferior faults, I have taken occasion to deliver myself, without reserve upon faults of the same species, appearing in their more enlarged and extreme forms. It is possible, it is probable, that by the use of this liberty censure will be incurred. It was not courted. It is not dreaded. The editor has followed the convictions which he has felt from an attentive survey of a certain portion of the religious world for some years, and in circumstances not unfavourable to observations. Under infirmities which remind him that his breath is in his nostrils, he has endeavoured to write in the fear of God. He presumes that none wish to be considered as infallible; that much harm has been done by injudicious defence and indiscriminate applause; that useful bodies of men may be rendered more useful; that while attached to the excellency of a cause, we yet should be impartial enough to see what is erroneous, and magnanimous enough to concede what is untenable. Love need not, and should not be blind. I admire the person of a friend, but surely this does not require me to praise a stain his face has accidentally contracted: rather let me endeavour gently to wipe it off, and not suffer strangers to identify it with the figure.

As additional specimens of Mr. Clark's manner of writing, and for the sake of the useful hints they contain, I here insert a hymn—a versification of a psalm, which, though so exquisitely beautiful, Dr. Watts has omitted to notice—and an address to parents and tutors. The editor presumes the propriety of his uniting to this work, the address he delivered at the mournful funeral of his friend, will not be questioned.

THE BREVITY OF LIFE.

Swift as an arrow cuts its way
Through the soft yielding air;
Or as the sun's more subtle ray,
Or lightning's sudden glare;
Or as an eagle to the prey,
Or shuttle through the loom;—
So haste our fleeting lives away,
So rush we to the tomb.

Like airy bubbles, lo! we rise,
And dance upon life's stream;
Till soon the air that caus'd, destroys
Th' attenuated frame.
Down the swift stream we glide apace,
And carry death within;
Then break, and scarcely leave a trace
To show that we have been.

The man the wisest of our kind,
Who length of days had seen;
To birth and death a time assign'd,
But none to life between.
Yet lo! what consequences close
This transient state below;
Eternal joys, or, missing those,
Interminable wo.

THE CXXXVII PSALM PARAPHRASED.

By Babel's streams we sat and wept;
For Zion's woes our hearts did rend:
Our harps, in tune no longer kept,
Upon the willows we suspend.

For there our foes insult us still,
And taunting, aggravate our wrongs—
"Captives display your boasted skill;
Come sing us one of Zion's songs."

The songs of Zion are the Lord's,
And his are all the notes we raise;
We will not touch the tuneful chords
Till we can sound them in his praise.

While Zion lies in ruin still,
Dare we her dear remembrance leave?
No, first these hands shall lose their skill,
These tongues shall to our palates cleave.

Remember, Lord, how Edom's sons
Proudly contemn'd us in our woes;
Triumph'd o'er Zion's scatter'd stones,
And urg'd to rage her cruel foes.

But God will Babylon destroy,
Her righteous doom shall none retard;
And happy he who sees the day,
When she shall meet her due reward.

TO PARENTS, &c.

PARENTS, and all who have in charge
To form the rising race,
Your duties numerous are and large!
And awful is your place.

The honour of your Maker's name,
The welfare of mankind;
Your children's happiness and fame—
Are all to you consign'd.

O then invoke the aid of heav'n,
Superior wisdom ask;
That love and prudence may be giv'n
To undertake the task.

And would you much relieve your toil?
Then meet their tempers right:
False tenderness is sure to spoil:
And harshness to affright.

Nor yet neglect restraint too long,
Till nature 's wild and rude:
Habits of vice may grow so strong
As scarce to be subdu'd.

The garden of the youthful mind
Must not be left alone:
Some work therein you 'll daily find
Is needful to be done.

The useful plant and pleasant flow'r
Are rais'd with care and toil:
But noxious weeds too oft o'erpower;
Congenial with the soil.

While green the twig, and pliant still,
Then bend it to its place;
While warm the wax, impress the seal,
Which time will not efface.

And first, unto the great Supreme
Direct their high regard:
Whith solemn awe to speak of him,
His name, his works, his word.

And ever let them rev'rence yield
To his appointed day:
Not saunt'ring o'er the streets or fields
In idleness or play;

But to the temples of his grace,
Your young immortals lead;
And what they hear, at home impress,
And there the Scriptures read.

Next, to the pow'rs which God ordains,
Enjoin submission due;
Obedience to superiors gains
Authority to you.

Teach them with equals to forego,
All bickerings and strife;
Peace and good nature often know
A long and happy life.

From savage cruelty, O turn
Betimes the tender mind!
Who torture insects, soon may learn
To butcher human kind!

But every kind and gentle deed
Should your applauses meet:
Sure those who kindness always need
Should others kindly treat.

To make distress their merriment,
Deserves severest blame:
The wanton crime God may resent,
And make your child the same!

Immodest speeches, songs obscene,
Teach them to shun and hate;
With what is vulgar, low, or mean,
In language or in gait.

But let their minds retain and prize,
More than their daily food,
The choicest sayings of the wise,
And maxims of the good.

Dishonest practices, and mean,
Discountenance always:
Nor let a knavish trick be seen,
E'en in their childish plays.

To hate a lie, to love the truth,
Inculcate all you can:
These make an amiable youth,
And a respected man.

Though now their labour needless seems,
To industry inure:
What may befall in future times,
No mortal can be sure.

Let them not idly pass a day,
Some useful study find,
Or innocent and healthful play,
To recreate the mind.

But with what play-mates ere you trust
Your darling, O beware!
Example, like corroding rust,
Will tarnish all your care.

Who would be wise, must with the wise
Associate day by day:
Oft, deeds that manhood signalize
Are learned in youthful play.

Thus taught to act their part aright
On life's important stage,
They now will prove your heart's delight,
And soothe your drooping age.

AN ADDRESS DELIVERED AT THE INTERMENT.

—THESE are the remains of the Rev. John Clark;——once—alas! what language death compels us to use!—once—the kind neighbour and friend of these mourning connexions who are bedewing his memory with their tears;—once the affectionate father of this beloved son who is raising his streaming eyes to a nobler relation, and saying "thou art the guide of my youth;"—once—the tender husband of this pious widow who is endeavouring to say, "the Lord gave and the Lord hath taken away, and blessed be the name of the Lord;"—once—the faithful pastor of this bereaved people who are "mourning most of all that they shall see his face and hear his voice no more."——

And for what purpose are we assembled together?—Not to flatter. Who could indulge in adulation with a grave yawning under his eye?—Not even to eulogize the dead;—not to enlarge on the excellency of his character, his intellectual powers, his acquired endowments, the originality of his preaching, or the success of his labours in the conversion of souls, and the formation and enlargement of a flourishing Christian church. And the reason is—not because we deem funeral eulogy improper. The memory of the just *is* blessed; and we *ought* to hold up to view examples of divine grace and to glorify God in them.—Not because we feel a disinclination to speak of the deceased. It would exceedingly gratify the feelings of him who is now addressing you if he were favoured with an opportunity to do justice to a character he has always held in the highest esteem.—But it would violate order by anticipating what custom has rendered more proper to bring forward in a funeral sermon, and which will be delivered within these walls on the Lord's-day morning by our young friend and brother, who now fully suc-

ceeds to the office of the departed man of God.- May a double portion of the spirit of Elijah rest on Elisha.

—What then has drawn us around this vault, and how shall we occupy the few moments sacred to this service? We are come hither to see that creatures are nothing; that man in his best estate is altogether vanity; that human distinctions and advantages are precarious and vanishing. Here the rich and the poor meet together. The small and the great are here. And how dieth the wise man? Even as the fool. "The voice said, cry; and I said, what shall I cry—All flesh is grass and all the goodliness thereof is as the flower of the field."

We are called hither to contemplate the evil of sin. It is this that has turned us out of paradise into a wilderness; it is this that has cursed the ground and sown it with thorns and briers; it is this that has stored the elements with mischief; it is this that has produced earthquakes, famine, pestilence, war; it is this that has infected the constitution with numberless diseases, that breaks in pieces the human frame, that tears asunder the bonds that attach so closely together the various relations of life, that reduces the lovely form to putrefaction, that compels us to bury our dead out of our sight, "where they say to corruption, Thou art my father; and unto the worm, Thou art my mother and sister." And do you—can you love sin? Can you serve a monster stained with the blood of every dear relation, and of all mankind? Can you roll that as a sweet morsel under your tongue which is infinitely more poisonous than the gall of asps?—If there was no other consideration to excite an abhorrence of sin, this is surely sufficient—that it "brought death into the world and all our wo."

We are called together to learn what we are so prone to forget, that we are dying, and by an instance of mortality in another to be reminded of our own. We are all partakers of the same nature: we are all under the operation of the same sentence, "dust thou art and unto dust shalt thou return." Death is the "way of *all* the earth:" the grave "the house appointed for *all* living." In other wars there are exemptions, there are dismissions, but in this "there is no discharge." The solemnities and services that we see attending our neighbours, friends, and relations, will be required for us:—will be required *certainly;* and will be required *soon.* "For what is our life? It is even a vapour that appeareth for a little time and then vanisheth away." "Our days are swifter than a weaver's shuttle." Every image that art and nature can supply is employed in the Scriptures to hold forth the brevity of our duration upon earth: but no language can express, no imagination can conceive the importance attached to the termination of it. And yet it is as true as it astonishing—that the principal care of thousands is only to keep this most interesting of all subjects from their thoughts! But if there are any such deluded creatures hearing me this morning, let me remind you —that shutting your eyes against danger is not providing for your security: that your putting the evil day far off is not putting it away; that your forgetfulness of the event does not even retard its approach.—While I speak you die. Every breath you draw, every pulse you beat brings you nearer the hour that will demonstrate the insufficiency of the world to succour you, and lay open to your view those states of immortal existence that await you beyond the grave. And can you deem it improper or needless to realize this truth? and make this awful fact the subject of serious reflection! Would it not be reasonable and useful to say individually to yourselves—"Suppose my body was nailed up in this coffin, in what region, and with what associates would my soul now be found?—Should I be joined to the spirits of just men made perfect, or have my portion with the devil and his angels?" Would it not be pious, would it not be blessed to pray, "Make me to know my end and the measure of my days what it is, that I may know how frail I am. So teach us to number our days that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom!"

We are come hither to inquire what can prepare us to meet the king of terrors, and make us more than conquerors over the last enemy that is to be destroyed. And here, by every thing that is awful and interesting, let me beseech you to guard not only against indifference but against mistake. For there is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but it ends in the most dreadful disappointment. The consequences of delusion are remediless; the possibility of it is obvious; the frequency of it is certain. There are many whose hope is as the spider's web—curiously wrought but easily destroyed. Search the Scriptures therefore, and pray that the spirit of God may lead you into all truth. You will then be directed to HIM in whom our absent friend alone trusted, and in whom he found "righteousness and strength:" to HIM who presents himself to us under every form of kindness and love, and cries "Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden and I will give you rest:" to HIM who even among these desolations and triumphs of mortality appears, "the resurrection and the life," and promises "He that believeth in me though he were dead yet shall he live; and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die."—Believest thou this?—Are you convinced that he is the only foundation on which a sinner can build with safety? That he is the way, the truth, and the life; and that no man cometh unto the Father but by him? That he once suffered for sins the just for the

unjust, that he might bring us unto God? That he is our peace; and that by his stripes we are healed! Have you ever addressed him in the language of Peter, "Lord save or I perish!" Have you ever committed your eternal concerns into his hand, knowing in whom you have believed! Is the life that you now live in the flesh by the faith of the Son of God who loved you and gave himself for you? Is he every thing *to* you, and is he every thing *with* you? Is the same mind in you that was also in Christ Jesus? Does the same blood that speaks peace to your troubled consciences purify them also from dead works to serve the living and true God?—Such a man is prepared for life with all its events; for death with all its importance. Let him die *how* he will—*where* he will—*when* he will; to die is gain. The consequences of death being so tremendous, and the uncertainty of life being so manifestly great, no man, while unfit to leave this world, can possibly enjoy any happiness, but from ignorance or diversion: the moment he reflects, his peace and pleasure melt away. But what a source of tranquillity and satisfaction has he,—who possesses a good hope through grace that he is "accepted in the beloved;" that he has "redemption through his blood even the forgiveness of sins;" that "God has given to him the earnest of the spirit:"—who knows that while "the earthly house of this tabernacle is dissolving, he has a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens:"—who can say "Yea though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death I will fear no evil, for thou art with me, thy rod and thy staff they comfort me"—"I have waited for thy salvation, O Lord." This man alone is worthy of our envy. "Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his."

We are called hither to weep and mourn. It would argue a criminal insensibility if when the righteous perished no man laid it to heart. It would defeat the moral purposes of Heaven in the dispensation. "By the sadness of the countenance the heart is made better." On such an occasion as this—

> "Our grief becomes us and our tears are just."

Not indeed with regard to the deceased. *He* is released, indulged, enriched, dignified, exceeding abundantly above all we could ask or think: and with subordinate propriety he could say to survivors with our Lord "If ye loved me ye would rejoice, because I said I go unto the Father." But his gain is our loss. We lose by his removal, a benefactor, a defender, an advocate, an example: and when we look, and see reason weeping, mercy weeping, truth weeping, religion weeping, can we avoid the sympathy, and refuse to weep too?—As such men, such Christians, such ministers withdraw, what a melancholy hue they cast around—how they impoverish our world—how they come "over us like clouds to cool our brain less arduous!"—how they wean us

> From these low grounds where sorrows grow
> And every pleasure dies.

—How they allure us upwards, and induce us to say with Thomas, "Let us go away that we may die with him."

We are called hither to pay the last token of respect to the revered remains now lying before us. What though these eyes that once beamed intelligence are closed in darkness; what though these lips are silent that once proclaimed the Saviour's love; what though this body be now deserted of its immortal inhabitant, and is reduced to a senseless clod—yet it is not to be despised—it *was* the workmanship of God—it *was* the temple of the Holy Ghost—it *did* accompany the soul in every trial and duty—it *is* the Redeemer's purchase—it *shall* be "changed and fashioned like his own glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself."—In the belief of this truth we commit this precious seed to the dust.—

[*Here the corpse was laid in the grave.*]

—"It is sown in dishonour; it is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness; it is raised in power: it is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body. And so it is written, the first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit. Howbeit that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterward that which is spiritual. The first man is of the earth, earthy: the second man is the Lord from heaven. As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy; and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly. And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly. Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption. Behold, I show you a mystery; we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory

hrough our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord; forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord."

And now servant of God farewell. We turn away from thy tomb to mingle with thy spirit, and to transcribe the excellencies of thy life into our own. We hail thee. Thy warfare is accomplished. Thy tears are wiped away. Thou hast reached him who was the end of thy conversation, "Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever." We rejoice that no man has taken thy crown. We rejoice that thou hast left a profession unstained by error or by vice. We rejoice that we have nothing to conceal, nothing to extenuate when thy name, mentioned in public or in private, awakens the attentions it deserves. —Thy dying pillow was not perplexed with those anxious forebodings that have tried the faith of many; the objects of thy regard are amply enriched by the bounty of providence, and are disposed to honour the Lord with their substance. The wife of thy bosom is following hard after thee: and the son of her womb, and the son of her vows is resolving, at thy hallowed grave, that she shall not travel alone—her people shall be his people, and her God his God. Thine eyes have seen the good of Jerusalem; a numerous church undivided and peaceful, blessed with a pastor after thine own heart "who shall feed them with knowledge and understanding;" and who, though "young and tender," is looking to that grace that is sufficient for him.—

Our separation is only temporary; a time of re-union is hastening on. Farewell, Farewell. —We shall soon meet thee in that world where the sound will be heard no more.

U

PREFACE

TO THE

LIFE OF MRS. SAVAGE.

BY WILLIAM JAY.

In November last, going to Shrewsbury to preach for the Swan Hill Sunday-school, I called upon my amiable and worthy friend, the editor of the following sheets. He showed me a number of manuscript volumes, filled with the diary and remarks of Mrs. Savage; and intimated some design of publishing a selection from them. I was so impressed and delighted, after hearing various extracts, indiscriminately taken, that I applauded the wish, and endeavoured to accelerate the accomplishment of it. Having therefore rendered myself in some measure responsible for the publication, by my opinion and advice, I the more readily comply with his desire in writing a few words by way of introduction.

The relationship of this good woman will deservedly bespeak some peculiar attention to the following pages: for who, without sentiments of love and veneration, can think of PHILIP HENRY, her Father, and of MATTHEW HENRY, her Brother?

The daughter and the sister was worthy of her excellent kindred. She possessed much of their piety, and no inconsiderable share of their talent. She had their familiar acquaintance with the Scripture; their prompt remembrance of its significant phrases; and their easy and pertinent accommodation of them to events. She had the same devoutness of remark; the same sprightliness of observation; the same degree of quaintness—just sufficient to awaken notice, and aid recollection, but not enough entirely to offend good taste.

She was "a gracious woman, and she retains honour." By the providence of Him who has said, "Them that honour me I will honour," after serving her generation according to the will of God, and falling asleep, her memory, at the distance of more than a century, is blessed; and her works, written in the closet, praise her in the gate.

The species of writing in which she so largely indulged, was far more common in her days than it is in ours. It has been abused, and rendered ridiculous by its minuteness and too frequent publication: yet properly conducted, it would prove eminently conducive to usefulness. It would promote communion with Providence, and bring a man within the reach of the promise, "Whoso is wise, and will observe these things, even they shall understand the lovingkindness of the Lord." It would secure the habit of retirement, and the practice of self-inspection. It would enable the writer, in review, to compare himself with himself, and awaken humiliation and repentance, when, instead of growing in grace and in the knowledge of his Lord and Saviour, he found that he was standing still, or had left his first love.—And though we have not the formality of the thing in the Scripture, we have many indications of the principle: as in the names which Joseph and Moses imposed upon their children; in the stone which Samuel reared and called Ebenezer; in the pot of manna, and Aaron's rod that budded, laid up in the ark; in the command—"Thou shall remember all the way which the Lord thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness:" in the reproof—"Of the rock that begat thee thou art unmindful, and hast forgotten the God that formed thee:" in the resolution—"Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits."

Some diaries were written, either for the express purpose of meeting the public eye, or in the apprehended probability of it. When this is known to be the case, we cannot peruse them with the same degree of pleasure and freedom as when they seem written for their own sake, and betray no wish to produce effect. Nothing was further from the mind of Mrs. Savage, than the public exhibition of what she wrote. It was solely inscribed for her own use and edification. Her views in it she has thus recorded. "It is in my thoughts to do something in the nature of a diary, being encouraged by the advantage others have gained thereby, and the hope that I might be furthered by it in a godly life, and be more watchful over the frame of my heart, when it must be kept on record. I would approve myself to God, who alone knows the sincerity of my heart. To him I

have made known my request herein, and I heartily beg, that what I shall at any time put down, may be the workings of my heart, and that in nothing I may bear witness against myself." In this temper of mind the whole seems to have been penned: and nothing can be more pleasing or edifying than the perusal of such unstudied, undisguised representations of her conscience and her character.

The inspection shows us, that a dissent from the National Church may be founded in conviction, as well as education; and does not necessarily imply a fastidious, or a factious disposition; that it does not render its subject blind to what is good or excellent in the doctrine and liturgy of the establishment, or prevent prayer for its success, or rejoicing in its welfare. It shows us too, how little it encourages disaffection to civil obedience, or forbids "rendering to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's." Could the diaries of Mrs. Savage's times be explored, what a contrast would be found between the sentiments such worthies confessed before God in their most sacred moments, and those charged upon them by their calumniating adversaries. Take the following extract from the journal of her honoured father, when deprived of his living for conscience' sake:—

"1663, May 29th. A thanksgiving day for the king's return; a mercy in itself, for which the Lord be praised, though I, and many more, suffer by it."

We perceive in these pages, that evangelical principles do not lead to licentiousness, but are friendly to every duty we owe to God, our fellow-creatures, and ourselves. Where do we here see any traces of—that bold familiarity with the Supreme Being—of that contempt of others, which cries, Stand by, I am holier than thou—of that relaxation of vigilance; that carelessness of conduct; that presumptuousness of hope, which in the minds and languages of many, seem for ever identified with the doctrines of grace?

We may see here somewhat of the nature and value of Christian experience. We are accustomed to speak of doctrine, experience, and practice; but though these are in a measure different, they are not separable: they resemble the colours in the rainbow; you can distinguish them, but you cannot limit; they imperceptibly melt into each other. Christian experience results from enlightened views of divine things, which is no other than doctrinal belief: and it issues in the conversation and life—which is nothing less than practical godliness. Yea these operate mutually, as cause and effect: for as our perceptions influence our feelings, and these our conduct; so practice increases our feelings, and these aid our judgment; for the exemplification of our religious views in our dispositions and actions, renders them more clear, and more powerful. Hence the meaning of the term; for experience signifies knowledge derived from trial, in contradistinction to conjecture and theory. A Christian does not at first adopt religious sentiments, or engage in religious exercises, with a view to make experiments; yet a reception of the former, and an attention to the latter have this effect. They put these things into a state of trial; and a new kind of evidence is obtained by the individual. He that believeth hath the witness in himself; and though it may not be convincing to others, it is very satisfactory to his own heart, and he is neither to be ridiculed, or argued out of it. Hence, says our Lord, "Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." Hence men are invited to "taste and see that the Lord is good." Hence Christians are represented as having "tasted that the Lord is gracious." Hence David says, "Because thou hast been my help, therefore under the shadow of thy wings will I rejoice:" and Paul exults, "I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed to him against that day."

I here look into Mrs. Savage's heart, and I see this satisfaction—yet not excluding many anxious and painful feelings: and the Christian is pourtrayed in the Scripture, by his fear, as well as by his confidence; by his weeping, as well as rejoicing. A stone remains the same all the year; but what changes does the living tree feel, and what different aspects does it exhibit in the four seasons? I see in this subject of divine grace, no vain, no proud pretensions; she nowhere says, "I have made my heart clean, I am pure from my sin;" "I have already attained, I am already perfect:" but in every page she cries, "This one thing I do, forgetting the things that are behind, and reaching forth unto those that are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of my high calling of God in Christ Jesus." Amidst all her complaints of the want of more conformity and devotedness to God, we still see her—differing from others—a new creature—God's workmanship: and we see reason why Christians, under all their acknowledged imperfections, are called "righteous," and "godly," and "holy," and "spiritual:"—for we see the complete state to which she aspired powerfully at work in its principles; already commenced in its preparations; already insured in its earnests; already enjoyed in its foretastes. We see "the path of the just, which is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day."

The experience of Mrs. Savage shows us, that religion is not always begun abruptly, or in a manner bordering on prodigy. It is often derived, under the divine agency, from pious education, family worship, parental instruction, holy example. Mr. Baxter goes so far as to say, that if these were discharged as they ought to be, even the preaching of the

word would not be the most common means of conversion. It is certain that many of the most eminent and useful ministers among the puritans and nonconformists were not converted from a course of profligacy, but were trained up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord; from children knew the holy Scriptures: and the change in them was as gradual in its progress, as it was proved to be real and divine in its effects.

Many, I fear, are tempted to think suspiciously or loweringly of the acquisition of religion in this humble and unostentatious mode: and deem it far preferable, that a man should have been led from the depths of Satan into the way everlasting; have felt a sudden violence; and, after enduring insufferable terror and anguish, be elevated into confidence and rapture. We are not to limit the Holy One of Israel; yet ought we to be careful, not to draw universal conclusions from particular cases, or convert exceptions into general rules. It is one of the golden sentences of Mr. Henry, her brother, "God is sometimes found of them that seek him not, but he is always found of them that seek him." It is a mercy if God calls us by his grace in any way; but where the certainty of the change is so extremely obvious, the subject is too prone to rest convinced of the fact, instead of praying "create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me." From the apparent magnitude of the change, he is too prone to feel, as if it had finished a work which it only began. From the superior notice and wonder it excites, the more temptation is there to spiritual vanity and pride. The suddenness of the illumination frequently dazzles, while it enlightens; and the man is likely to feel and retain a partial attachment to some one religious doctrine, according to the first direction his mind takes under such a novel and powerful impression: and for want of those *relative* views, which should accompany and qualify and direct his fervour, his zeal is seldom according to knowledge. Often too, coarseness and freedom of manners result from former viciousness, of which the individuals themselves are not aware, but which expose them in their social, especially female intercourse. I never knew a professor of religion, or a preacher of the word, who fell by certain temptations, but had been, previously to his connexion with the Christian world, the victim of vice. Moral and virtuous habits produce delicacy and impose restraint. Former scenes of guilt will often revive in the imagination; and though they are not entertained there, yet by passing through the mind, they defile it, and distress it. I have heard more than one pious character confess the pain and injury he has suffered from this quarter, even in his public and retired devotions, and who would have given the world to be free from the shocks he received from the hauntings of the ghosts of his old iniquities. To which he may add, that though morality is not religion, yet it is a social benefit—but the man called from the dregs of profaneness, has to look back upon the injury he has done to others, and to mourn over effects which he cannot repair. He has led astray many that he may never be able to reclaim; and seeing those running the downward road, whom he led into it and encouraged by his vices, influence, and example, how often, as he advances towards heaven, which he is almost ashamed to enter, must he sigh and pray, "Deliver me from blood-guiltiness, O God of my salvation."

These reflections are not designed to exclude any from hope, however deeply they have transgressed; or to withhold esteem and confidence from those who have obtained mercy; but to remove a mistake by no means uncommon; and to induce those who have been preserved from vice, to be peculiarly thankful, that they were moral before they were converted; and to bless God for those early advantages which led them into connected and consistent views of religion; and that their characters were formed after models of excellency, placed constantly in sight, and endeared by all the claims of nature. They are designed also to call upon parents, not to leave their children to a kind of religious chance; or to suppose that divine grace is a thing perfectly independent of rational and pious means, instead of being connected with them and conveyed by them, and in them. Let the command and the promise be ever in their mind: "Train up a child in the way that he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it." Not that means are ever sufficient of themselves without the divine blessing, (and therefore there is as much need of prayer as of exertion,) but when God has appointed the means, and engaged to bless them, our hope is well founded; and in the *proper* use of them we may expect success with as much certainty, as in nature, the sower expects to reap.

Finally. I have no wish to hinder the humbling sense of inferiority, which persons acquainted with themselves will feel in reading these papers. There are certainly degrees of religious excellency. Even the good ground brought forth in the varied proportions of thirty, sixty, and an hundred fold. What a difference do we see between Abraham and Lot, with regard to lowliness of mind, self-denial, and a spirit of conciliation. What a difference between the centurion, who took our Saviour at his word, and Thomas, who required every kind of sensible evidence. —And Christians are in honour to prefer one another. Yet it should be remembered, that what is written in such diaries as this, is the fruit of retirement and reflection, and the

summary of the best feelings called forth in the presence of God. And whatever modern Christians think of *themselves*, I love not for *others* to view them as a race, very inferior to those who lived in an earlier period. We know who has said, "Say not thou, what is the cause that the former days were better than these? for thou dost not inquire wisely concerning this."

There may be the same degree of religious principle, while yet it is put forth in different ways. Even the constitutional temper will have some influence, as we see in the case of Martha and Mary. There was the same regard to our Saviour in each; but Martha was cumbered about much serving, while Mary sat at his feet to hear his words; and when, after the death of the brother, he was coming into Bethany, Martha went out to meet him, but Mary sat still in the house.—Nor should we forget, that the providence of God often diversifies the direction of religious principle. At one time it peculiarly calls forth the passive, at another, the active graces of the Christian: at one season it requires more of the private exercises of godliness, at another, more of its public efforts: winter leads the sap down into the roots, while summer calls it up into the branches, and displays it in the blossoms and the fruit.

We readily acknowledge, that with regard to the more private and retired influence of religion, they who lived in the days of Mrs. Savage were superior to the generality of modern Christians; but we make no scruple to say, many modern Christians are far superior to them in public spirit and active exertions. If the river spreads wide, or flows in various fertilizing currents, it cannot be expected to roll so deep. How little working, *comparatively*, do we find even in the feelings of many of these worthies towards the cause of God at large! Their own souls, their families, their particular churches—these drew forth their concern, but too much restricted it too. The present day exhibits a very different scene: and from a thousand public assemblies, convened for the very purpose, and evincing their sincerity and fervency by their efforts and sacrifices, we hear the exclamation, "Let the whole earth be filled with his glory." There is indeed a danger, that keeping other men's vineyards we should not be attentive to our own: and that our zeal should expend itself so much abroad, as to be extinguished before it reaches home: on the other hand it is true (though liable to perversion and abuse,) that if we mind God's affairs he will mind ours; and that, while doing his work, he that watereth shall be watered also. In the unprofitableness of those ministers, the barrenness of those churches, and the deadness of those professors, who from their selfishness, or sloth, or any doctrinal restraint, come not up to the help of the Lord, may be found at this hour illustrations of the truth of David's words: "Pray for the peace of Jerusalem, *they* shall prosper that love thee."

Had many Christians now living been cotemporaries with Mrs. Savage, they would have devoted that time and attention to religion in its retreats, which seemed not so much called for abroad. And had many who lived in her days been born in ours, they would have sprung forth at the call of those institutions which we have witnessed; and, following the direction of Heaven, have fallen in with a state of things which demands the utmost co-operation and activity; and which not only allows, but demands that every subject of divine grace should be also its instrument and its agent: and when by teaching poor children and adults to read and write, by dispensing tracts, by aiding Bible and Missionary Societies, and by endeavouring to evangelize our own dark villages, Christians, as well as preachers, shall be named the "Priests of the Lord; and men shall call them the ministers of our God:" when the promise made to the church shall be fulfilled, "They that be of thee shall build the old waste places; thou shalt raise up the foundation of many generations; and thou shalt be called the repairer of the breach, the restorer of paths to dwell in."

This is the glory of our day: and let not Christians be comparatively undervalued because they obey the obvious will of Providence, and are workers together with God. The period so long prayed for is arrived; and we are required to rise, even from our devotions, and serve. We could employ the hours in songs of praise; but the voice cries "Work while it is called to-day:" and you shall soon rest from your labours, and join those who dwell in his house above, and are still praising him. Christians are now required not to sit still and record their feelings, but to endeavour to communicate them. They must not abide by the stuff. The field calls them. The harvest is come, and it is harvest weather, and the ears ungathered in, will soon fall and perish. "Say not ye, there are yet four months, and then cometh harvest! behold, I say unto you, lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest, and he that reapeth receiveth wages, and gathereth fruit unto life eternal: that both he that soweth and he that reapeth may rejoice together." WM. JAY.

Bath, May 2d, 1818.

PRAYER FOR THE SUCCESS OF THE GOSPEL:

A SERMON

PREACHED AT TOTTENHAM-COURT CHAPEL, BEFORE THE MISSIONARY SOCIETY;

ON THURSDAY EVENING, MAY 12, 1796.

BY WILLIAM JAY.

And let the whole earth be filled with his glory; amen and amen. The prayers of David, the son of Jesse, are ended.—Psalm lxxii. 19, 20.

In reviewing the Scriptures at large, and the book of Psalms in particular, we see good men exemplifying different views and dispositions, according to the various objects which excited and engaged their attention.

It is a happy frame of mind which converts every event and every contemplation into prayer.—Such was the happy frame of David's mind when he composed this psalm. Surveying the grandeur of Solomon's reign, he perceives "a greater than Solomon," and by a beautiful transition, passes to the reign of "Messiah the Prince, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and whose dominion endureth from generation to generation." After a striking representation of the properties and advantages of the Saviour's government, he breaks forth in these sublime and animated strains.—"Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, who only doeth wondrous things. And blessed be his glorious name for ever: and let the whole earth be filled with his glory; amen and amen. The prayers of David the son of Jesse are ended." Behold the grand desire which actuated this man of God. He prays that "the whole earth may be filled with his glory." At present the earth is void of God's glory. To a gracious mind nothing is more painful than to reflect upon the millions of mankind still "lying in wickedness"—"having no hope and without God in the world."—Who does not unite in this request? And who does not pray that "the glory of the Lord may be revealed," and "that all flesh may see it together."

David not only prays, but prays with fervency; and, to draw your attention to a point with which I would animate this vast assembly—see how much his heart was set upon this object. For, having expressed his desire, he exclaims, "Amen and amen"—so be it, so be it. Again and again I say it, and let others say it too—let men, let angels repeat it—success to my prayers, and success to the prayers of all who breathe the same wishes.—With this he would "finish his course." "The prayers of David, the son of Jesse, are ended." This was the last psalm he ever composed. He wrote it on his dying bed. The last words of dying men, especially if they have been men of illustrious character, have peculiar weight in them.—Let, says David, resigning his spirit into the hands of God, let but the kingdom of Jesus Christ be established, and all the nations and the families of the earth be blessed in him, and I have enough, I desire no more;—and "now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word."—"Even so, come Lord Jesus, come quickly."

Was this fervour too great? My brethren, here all the excellencies of prayer are combined. Here devotion is wrought up to its highest perfection. And at once to justify David's zeal, and to excite your admiration of it—to lead you to adopt this prayer, and to adopt it with the glowing emotions of "the man after God's own heart," let us examine five things.

I. What can be more important and interesting than the matter of this prayer?—It is the diffusion of the Divine glory. The word glory, when applied to God, denotes that manifestation of himself by which his rational creatures are capable of knowing him, for in himself he is incomprehensible, "dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen or can see." This manifestation appears in various degrees.

His glory shines in the works of nature,

and behold a universe starting into existence to teach us "his eternal power and godhead." David was no unaffected spectator of the wonders of creation: "O Lord, our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth. I consider the heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars which thou hast ordained." "The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament showeth his handywork. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night showeth knowledge. There is no speech nor language, where their voice is not heard. Their line is gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world."

A watchful eye will perceive the glory of God shining through the dispensations of his providence,—in preserving the world which he has made—in supplying the wants of his creatures—in maintaining the vicissitudes of the seasons—in establishing such regulations in society as, notwithstanding the violence of men's passions, and oppositions of their interests, enable us to live upon earth in tolerable peace and safety, enjoying a thousand comforts—in administering encouragements, supports, and rewards to the righteous—in restraining, disappointing, and punishing the wicked, especially when they become dangerous to community—in the connexion which is found to exist between moral and natural evil—in the pleasure which always attends the exercise of virtue, and the pain which always accompanies the practice of vice. Indeed, in the moral government of mankind, besides the general evidences of his wisdom, power, and goodness, we behold some traces of his righteous character, as the "judge of the whole earth."

"He has magnified his word above all his name," and he peculiarly discovers himself in the gospel, which we emphatically, and by way of distinction, call revelation. All other displays of God are defective. They are partial, uninfluential, unintelligible, abstracted from the Scriptures. They are partial—they hold forth the divine perfections separately; they teach us nothing of their harmony, extent, and limitations. So that, admitting we could prove that God was just and merciful, we could not determine where the exercise of justice would stop, and the operation of mercy would begin. They are uninfluential. That they were never the means of bringing men to repentance and holiness, appears from an observation of the heathen world. Even their wise men, "when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things. Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves: who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever." And what are our modern philosophers, who have rejected the Christian system to adore the idol of reason, and worship the goddess of nature? They are unintelligible. Creation is a book, and its various works constitute the alphabet, but what connects the letters, and teaches us to read. Without the Bible, it is utterly impossible to give a probable account of the origin of the world, or the appearances of nature; of the events that have already taken place, or of those which are every day presenting themselves to our view. "But when," to use the language of an author whose name I should mention, were I not forbidden by his presence, "when reason kindles her feeble lamp with fire from God's altar, and supplies it continually with fresh oil from the sacred stores; what was dark becomes clear, what was perplexed becomes regular, and the dim and scattered fragments become legible and intelligible." And though we may in some measure discern what God is, by observing what he does, his glory is obscured by numberless difficulties; "righteousness and judgment are the habitation of his throne;" but "cloud and darkness are round about him." "His way is in the sea, and his path in the deep waters, and his footsteps are not known." I love to assert the importance of the gospel, especially at a time when "science, falsely so called," would depreciate its value, and more than question its necessity. The gospel exhibits God in all his excellencies. The entrance of sin is a dark ground, on which God is displayed to advantage; it has given occasion for the exercise of the divine perfections in a manner which will eternally astonish the universe

In the law given at Sinai, and "written in tables of stone," we behold awful rays of the glory of God; but here we see that "law magnified and made honourable." Jesus Christ is the law of God alive, the ten commandments incarnate.

In Jesus Christ we have a personal representation of Deity. Would you know what God is? Behold "the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person." It pleased him to assume human nature, and, softening down the effulgence of divinity by the veil of flesh, to appear in our world. Men are called to "behold a new thing in the earth"—a mind inhabiting a fleshly tabernacle like our own, unpolluted with any earthly defilement, unseduced by the objects of sense, unmoved by satanic influence, adorned with the most lovely graces—all calmness and gentleness—full of pity to the miserable—all occupied in doing good—unprovoked by injuries, unsubdued by sufferings. Ah, the infi-

tuation of the world! They might have seen that "God was in very deed come down to dwell with men upon the earth." I do not wonder that Jesus Christ should say, "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father." I do not wonder that the apostle should say, "God who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." And here it is that his glory shines forth with a lustre not only grand, but encouraging and inviting. How it dissolves my doubts, how it dissipates my fears, how it attracts me to "his throne for mercy and grace to help in every time of need." God in nature, is God above me; God in providence, is God beyond me; God in law, is God against me; but God in Christ, is God with me and for me.

In the plan of salvation by a crucified Saviour, not only men, but angels obtain the most glorious idea of Jehovah. We never read of their being naturalists or astronomers, but they are Christian students; they mingle with us at the foot of the cross, "desiring to look into these things:" for here all the divine perfections come forward and assert their claims, and here they are all satisfied and honoured. Man's redemption is God's glory. Hence the exclamation of the prophet, "Sing, O ye heavens, for the Lord hath done it; shout, ye lower parts of the earth; break forth into singing, ye mountains: O forests and every tree therein: for the Lord hath redeemed Jacob, and glorified himself in Israel." Hence the song of the "heavenly hosts praising God," and saying, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, goodwill towards men."

The gospel displays the glory of God in "renewing us after his image in righteousness and true holiness." I remember the words of our Saviour at the grave of Lazarus, "Martha, said I not unto thee, that if thou wouldest believe, thou shouldest surely see the glory of God?" Did the glory of God appear in the re-animation of a breathless body? And shall it not much more appear in the resurrection of a soul "dead in trespasses and sins?" Upon this principle God promises to place salvation in Zion for Israel his glory."

I would not hastily pass over this part of our subject. Man was originally created in the likeness of God; but he lost it by sin. The law still requires this resemblance, but it is the gospel that effects it." "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature." "Beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, we are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the spirit of the Lord." Every thing in the gospel reflects power upon God. Its doctrines, its precepts, its threatenings, its promises, are all worthy of God; but they are its effects, which most clearly decide its superiority over every other system. Plato, with all his diligence, and with all the celebrity his philosophy acquired him, was unable to bring out the inhabitants of one city, or one village to walk by his rules. The law only describes duty, and enforces obligation, by proposing rewards and punishments. But, "the spirit of life in Christ Jesus," makes us "free from the law of sin and death." "The gospel is the power of God, to salvation to every one that believeth." By an admirable method God puts his word into the heart. The apostle James speaks of it under a very familiar allusion. You all know the process of grafting a tree. The scion inserted, receives the juices, and changes them into its own quality, and causes the stock to bring forth new fruit—such is "the engrafted word which is able to save the soul." It produces an internal assimilation, evidenced by the "fruit of the spirit; love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance." This changes the nature, and fills the understanding with right sentiments, and the heart with right dispositions. This, by its all-powerful energy, subdues deeprooted prejudices, sensual passions, worldly interests. This, by its all-cheering consolation, rescues the mind from despair, and makes us "joyful in tribulation," and triumphant in the hour of death. I appeal to fact. In the first ages of the church, did not the gospel make men wise, and holy, and happy, and useful? Did it not "teach them to deny all ungodliness and worldly lusts, to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world; looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ." And does it not to this day produce the same effects when it is faithfully preached? The world cannot be ignorant of this, nor can the promoters of erroneous systems, amidst the unprofitableness of their ministry, be unacquainted with it. Blessed be God, we frequently see the drunkard becoming sober, the swearer learning to "fear an oath," the covetous expanding with liberality. Yes, there are living examples of persons who were once a terror to themselves, a curse to their families, a judgment to their neighbours, delivered by the preaching of the cross, from the anguish of a guilty conscience, and the tyranny of vicious passions; becoming peaceable, gentle, "easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits." "The wolf also dwells with the lamb, and the leopard lieth down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together: and a little child shall lead them." However unbelievers may suspect the truth of the gospel, it would seem impossible for them to deny its utility. They may call it a fable, but this fable has been more efficacious in reforming the world, than the most serious truths of philosophers, and the most severe laws of magistrates. What they despise as a human invention, was more

beneficial to mankind in a few years, than all other boasted schemes through a succession of ages. No other collection of doctrine aims so high as the Christian dispensation. It affects nothing less, than to turn fallen men into angels, and to form societies below, like the "general assembly of just men made perfect in heaven." Chasing away error, vice, enmity, discord, and all the malignity with which sin has filled the earth; it diffuses light, love, and harmony, and unites men first to God, and then to each other in one divine and heavenly fraternity. Imagine for a moment the gospel universally diffused, and mankind at large living under its benign influence, what a lovely scene would this distracted earth exhibit, compared with present prospects?—"Nations learning war no more"—"swords beaten into ploughshares, and spears into pruning hooks"—"destructions come to a perpetual end"—"men living as brethren," and "loving one another out of a pure heart fervently." The prophets, delighted with the glorious change which they foresaw as the consequence of the gospel dispensation, have ascribed it in all the glowing style of eastern imagery. Sometimes they take the comparison from the human body, and behold, says Isaiah, a multitude of misery; the blind, the deaf, the lame, the dumb: but, "then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped—then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb shall sing." Sometimes they take the image from the natural world, and behold, says the same prophet, "a parched desert, where no water is, where the thirsty traveller pants and dies, where cattle cannot live, where grass cannot flourish; behold, on a sudden, the appearance reversed, waters springing out of the hills; and murmuring along the vallies, the fields standing thick with corn, sheep covering the plains, and trees crowning the tops of the mountains." "The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them; and the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose. It shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice, even with joy and singing: the glory of Lebanon shall be given unto it, the excellency of Carmel and Sharon, they shall see the glory of the Lord, and the excellency of our God."

II. The prayer appears still more excellent, if we consider the principle from which it proceeds. It is piety and benevolence; these are not two dispositions, but two references of the same disposition. We cannot separate what the Scripture has joined together; and if a man say, "I love God and hateth his brother, he is a liar; for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?"

The prayer comes from a soul penetrated with a love to God, and alive to his interest in the world. This concern divine grace always produces in the breasts of the godly. A Christian loves "God with all his heart, with all his mind, and with all his strength." Reason requires this supreme affection. We ought to regard objects in proportion to their real worth, and God is the perfection, the source of all excellency. We ought to love without bounds an object infinitely lovely. And what is the language of all the mercies we have received from God—blessings of birth, of infancy, of youth, of mature age—blessings pertaining to this life: "spiritual blessings," "wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, redemption"—where shall I end?—All these surround us, and with one voice cry, "O love the Lord, all ye his saints." By the mercies of God present your body a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service." He, at an expense which angels cannot compute, has served you—be all devotion in serving Him. "Whether ye eat or drink, or whatever ye do, do all to the glory of God." The Christian feels his obligations—he lives to God. He cannot be indifferent to his honour. See that man—"his eyes run down with tears." Has he lost his fortune? Has he heard God saying, "Son of man, behold I take from thee the desire of thine eyes with a stroke." No: he has heard a swearer; he has seen a Sabbath-breaker.—"His eyes run down with tears because men seek not God's law." Elijah is praying to die. What disappointments have embittered his life? "Lord they have broken thy covenant and digged down thine altars, and killed thy prophets," and I cannot survive thine expiring cause. Behold the venerable Eli upon a seat by the wayside, watching, while the messenger brings him heavy tidings. And first, he tells him of the defeat of his countrymen by the Philistines, "Israel is fled." Mournful intelligence. Next he tells him that his "two sons, Hophni and Phineas, are slain"—more awful still. But "his heart trembles for the ark of God," and when he hears that the ark of God is taken, he drops and dies. The charge of enthusiasm has been frequently brought against Christians, for want of distinguishing properly between the abuse of truth in certain instances, and its genuine influence and effects. It is impossible for us to believe the Gospel as we ought, without being zealous for the Lord of Hosts; and zeal for God is charity towards men.

The prayer before us springs from benevolence. To pray for ourselves is a duty—a duty, too, which perhaps some of you never performed: of some of you, perhaps, God never said, "Behold he prayeth." But it requires no great degree of virtue to be desirous of our own welfare. To be solicitous for the good of others, argues disinterested affection. That this is highly pleasing to God, appears not only from his enjoining us to re-

member others at his throne, but from the peculiar reward with which he honoured the exercise in the experience of Job. Job was a man of sorrows—trials drive us to prayer. This afflicted saint had, no doubt, under his calamities, frequently made supplication unto God: but the prayer which achieved his deliverance was not a prayer for himself. "The Lord turned the captivity of Job, when he prayed for his friends." That we do not love our neighbours as ourselves, appears from the disproportionate share we devote to our own interest in our petitions. There is a visible want of warmth in spreading the cases of others before the Lord. In the formality of worship, the condition of the heathen has been generally mentioned; but not with that feeling becoming the solemn thought that multitudes are "perishing for lack of knowledge." The person who confines all his attention to himself, deserves not the name of a man; by what means he persuades himself that he is a Christian, it is difficult to conceive. The Christian religion is founded in the compassions of God, and it must fill us with compassion. It must destroy the selfishness common to our depraved nature. It must produce a unity of interest with our fellow-creatures, and teach us to "look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others." What a lovely, what a noble disposition does the religion of Jesus Christ require and produce! Does the Christian weep? It is not only for the sins which he commits, and the troubles he endures. Does he rejoice? It is in another's prosperity as well as in his own. Does he pray? See how he expands beyond himself —"Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved." "For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh." For Zion's sake "will I not hold my peace; and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest until the righteousness thereof go forth as brightness, and the salvation thereof as a lamp that burneth." "Yet now if thou wilt forgive their sin—and if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of thy book which thou hast written."

III. Consider the universal extent of this request. Little minds confine their zeal within a contracted circle, which excludes all but the adherents of their own class. For a party they labour, and in the success of a party they rejoice. If they pray for rain, it is only to refresh and fructify their own gardens. They are strangers to the sublime and diffusive spirit of the gospel. Wretched bigotry—allow me a figure of speech—allow me to suppose, for a moment, that Being in existence whose death we have attended, and whose epitaph we have sung—wretched bigotry, what is thy language? Let the established Church prosper—let the Dissenting interest prevail—let the Independents multiply—let the Baptists swell their annual lists with numbers—let the Methodists spread on every side—let Tottenham-court chapel be "filled with his glory." But give me the language of the text—"And let the whole earth be filled with his glory. Amen and Amen." I love to see an expansion of soul, which, free from the shackles of party rage, includes all like the goodness of God.

I pass from religious denominations to countries.—It does not satisfy us to say, let England "be filled with his glory." It has frequently been charged upon the Scripture as a defect, that it does not sufficiently inculcate patriotism, or a love to a particular country; a virtue celebrated among all nations of the globe; a virtue which so long secured Greece, and so highly exalted Rome; a virtue practised in former times, and professed in our own; a virtue of which we have nothing left "but loaves and fishes."—The charge is partly false and partly true, and as far as it is true it will be found not a reproach, but an honour to the gospel. If we look into the Old Testament, we shall find this sacred injunction: "Pray for the peace of Jerusalem, they shall prosper that love thee." Never was love more sincere and ardent than that which the Jews exercised towards their native land. Jerusalem was the centre of their happiness, the seat of all the endearments of life. To adorn it they esteemed nothing too costly; to defend it they cheerfully shed their blood. Its prosperity satisfied them, its welfare made them forget their sorrows. When they saw it destroyed by the hands of the Babylonians, they abandoned themselves to grief and found life a burden; "they hung their harps upon the willows," "the voice of mirth was heard no more, and all the daughters of music were brought low." But even in its reduced state they retained the same affection, prizing its ruins above the superb palaces of Babylon; they "took pleasure in her stones, and favoured the dust thereof," each saying, "If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning. If I do not remember thee, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth; if I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief joy." And where does the New Testament enforce the wild idea that the whole world is to be our country, and mankind our fellow-citizens? Jesus Christ was a patriot; he loved his country, notwithstanding the ingratitude and cruelty of his countrymen. He first went "to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." As he drew near the devoted metropolis, "he wept over it." He commanded his apostles "to preach repentance and remission of sins to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem." The gospel does not destroy the useful feelings of nature, but corrects and sanctifies them; it inspires us with

sentiments becoming our condition, and never forgets that we are creatures of limited faculties. But after all what is patriotism? Is it such a partial attachment to a particular country as leads us to disregard the liberty and happiness of every other nation? Is it such an exclusive attachment as would lead us to oppress every other country, for the sake of our own, and destroy thousands who would not acquiesce in our opinion of avarice and ambition?—What was a Roman? A proud, unfeeling tyrant, who placed right in power, who triumphed remorselessly over undefended weakness, who gloried in proportion to the number of cities and provinces he had taken or destroyed.—What was the patriotism of a Roman? A false virtue, the destruction of all justice and benevolence—and this false virtue has always been admired because it conceals self-interest under the mask of public spirit, and gives license to inflict injuries not only with impunity but with applause. It is the glory of the gospel to say nothing of such patriotism. It is the glory of the gospel to set us above the prejudices which have so long and so unhappily kept men at variance —and to teach us that God has made of one blood all the nations of the earth—that men are not our enemies because they live at the other side of a channel, or a mountain—that they are not to be bought and sold as slaves because the sun has jetted their complexions —that we are "debtors to Jews and Greeks"—and that "as we have opportunity" without any exceptions "we are to do good unto all men." Christianity commands us to love all the human race, and to regard as our neighbours the inhabitants of the remotest regions, when their distresses require our aid, and it is in "the power of our hand to give it."

IV. We observe the divine resemblance of this prayer—God feels the same desire, and has the same object in view—we are acting according to his pleasure, "we are workers together with him." This appears from the precepts he has given, and the promises which he has made.

God's authority is interposed, and there are two injunctions in particular which deserve more attention than we have hitherto given them. Our duty appears from the words of the apostle to the Thessalonians, "brethren pray for us that the word of the Lord may have free course and be glorified." The allusion is beautiful, whether it respects a conquering army bearing down all opposition, marching from victory to victory; or an unobstructed river fertilizing its banks, spreading plenty over the country through which it passes, and augmenting as it rolls along till it becomes an ocean. Hear the language of God by the prophet, "I have set watchmen upon thy walls, O Jerusalem, which shall never hold their peace day nor night: ye that make mention of the Lord, keep not silence, and give him no rest, till he establish and till he make Jerusalem a praise in the earth." What importunity is here expressed!

The promises respecting this subject are "exceeding great and precious." I would repeat a few of them. "And it shall come to pass in the last days that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it." "And it shall be in that day that living waters shall go out from Jerusalem; half of them toward the former sea, and half of them toward the hinder sea, in summer and in winter shall it be, and the Lord shall be king over all the earth: in that day shall there be one Lord, and his name shall be one." "For the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea." I might enlarge quotation, but it will be of more importance to remove an objection taken from the supposition that those prospects have been already realized. This, if admitted, would damp our zeal, and weaken our hands. We contend, therefore, that nothing has taken place in any past experience of the church, whether Jewish or Christian, to substantiate those pleasing descriptions; that there has been nothing in the conduct of God to this day sufficient in extent, in duration, in glory, to imbody the hopes which his word has excited. When have these promises been accomplished?—In vain we look into the Jewish nation for a fulfilment. Much of their prosperity was diminished before many of these prophecies were given—they were in a distracted and suffering state under the reign of the kings of Judah and Israel—their city and temple were destroyed by the Chaldeans—though they returned from captivity, and rebuilded the city and temple, they continued a dependent people, and were tributaries to the Persian, Macedonian, and Roman power. Rejecting the Messiah, and imprecating his blood upon themselves and their children, they were "destroyed with a very sore destruction," and to this hour they remain "scattered and peeled," unable by their situation and circumstances, to perform the ceremonies of their own ritual.

In vain we look into the Christian church for a fulfilment. Since the apostle's days the boundaries of Zion have been altered, but never enlarged. Is not the greatest part of the earth to this day unacquainted with the name of God our Saviour? What is Christendom itself compared with the globe? A considerable part of Europe, almost the whole of the other three continents, with the numerous isles in the eastern and southern oceans, are covered with "gross darkness." It is thus that all men shall be blessed in him, "all nations shall call him blessed!" It is

thus that "from the rising of the sun even to the going down of the same, his name shall be great among the Gentiles, and in every place incense shall be offered to him and a pure offering." The extent of God's cause, therefore, has never been adequate to prediction.—And what has been the duration of its peace and prosperity? Sometimes the influences of divine grace attending the preaching of the word have been remarkable. The church of Christ has had blessed revivals, but they have never been of long continuance.—"The people of thy holiness have possessed it but a little while: our adversaries have trodden down thy sanctuary." But faith assures us that "there shall be abundance of peace so long as the moon endureth:" "that Zion shall be an eternal excellency, the joy of many generations." "Thy sun shall no more go down; neither shall thy moon withdraw itself: for the Lord shall be thine everlasting light, and the days of thy mourning shall be ended."

A glory is spoken of which has never been realized. "For brass I will bring gold, and for iron I will bring silver, and for wood brass, and for stones iron: I will also make thy officers peace, and thine exactors righteousness. Violence shall no more be heard in thy land, wasting nor destruction within thy borders; but thou shalt call thy walls Salvation, and thy gates Praise. The sun shall be no more thy light by day: neither for brightness shall the moon give light unto thee: but the Lord shall be unto thee an everlasting light, and thy God thy glory. Thy sun shall no more go down; neither shall thy moon withdraw itself: for the Lord shall be thine everlasting light, and the days of thy mourning shall be ended. Thy people also shall be all righteous." The more minutely we examine prophecy, the stronger is the confirmation of our hope, that a day will come "when wars shall cease to the ends of the earth;" when the animosities which have so long prevailed amongst Christians shall subside; when idolatry and superstition shall vanish; when truth and holiness and the pure worship of God shall abound.—We are authorized to expect that a period will come, when not only individuals in different nations of men shall be devoted to Christ, but also potentates of every state, whose example is influential, and whose authority gives them a peculiar advantage, shall own their subordination to him and make their dominion subservient to his. · Considering themselves in their different departments as delegated to rule by him, they will rule for him. Viewing themselves as subjects of his sovereign sway, "all kings shall fall down before him," and far from being distressed at any inquiries concerning his kingdom, they shall rejoice and "praise him." In all things shall He have the pre-eminence, who amongst other titles will be acknowledged "King of kings, and Lord of lords." Has all this been verified? How readest thou? These days are to come, the prospect is before us. And this prayer,

V. Is certain in its success. It must be accomplished. The world was made for the Son of God, and he shall have "the heathen for his inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for his possession." The enlargement of his kingdom is the uniform design of all the events of Providence. To this, all the commotions and changes which are taking place in the nations of the earth, and which so exceedingly perplex and confound the views of politicians, are tending; to this, a future day will show us, they were all subservient. These agitations are "shaking not the earth only, but also heaven," and will continue till "the removal of those things that are shaken as of things that are made, that those things which cannot be shaken may remain." "I will overturn, overturn, overturn it—until He come whose right it is, and I will give it him."

Nothing comes to pass by chance, and God never acts without a design worthy of himself. In the midst of apparent confusion and uproar, he guides the whole movement; "he makes the wrath of man to praise him." Things which we in our ignorance and rashness imagine unfavourable may be the most proper means which Supreme Wisdom could employ. Whatever our opinion may be respecting present occurrences, his plan is fixed, "his counsel shall stand, and he will do all his pleasure." The word is gone out of his mouth, and "hath he spoken and shall he not do it?" What he has promised he is able to perform. Impediments are nothing to him; "before Zerubbabel every mountain shall become a plain."

Do we stagger at the promise of God through unbelief? Let us remember we have a sufficient pledge of the whole in what he has already done. The joyful sound has already extended far, notwithstanding all the attempts of its enemies to restrain it. Multitudes from age to age have heard the glad tidings, and obtained salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ. What a happy change has this highly favoured island experienced since the invasion of Julius Cæsar. Suppose a Christian had landed with the Roman army, and after examining the state of the country, had heard a prophet predicting all the advantages we have long enjoyed.—Are we attempting any thing more improbable?—But what is every instance of conversion?—Some of you are not strangers to "the day of God's power." You know that "the exceeding greatness of his mighty power," which has been exerted in you, is sufficient to ensure success to our labours amongst the heathen—I consider every sinner as a little pagan

world in himself; and the grace which renews him, is all the encouragement we desire.

Draw no improper inference from this reasoning. Say not God will support his own cause, and execute his own purposes, and therefore we may sit down at our ease; we have nothing to do—He will maintain his own cause, and he will accomplish his own designs; but if you are properly affected, you will be desirous of becoming instruments in his hands. The certainty of the event, instead of relaxing diligence, should increase it; instead of preventing the use of means, should encourage us in the use of them; and if David's prayer be the prayer of your hearts, it will excite activity, it will lead you in proportion to its warmth to exert yourselves according to your stations, your talents, your opportunities. Without this our prayer is hypocrisy, and our pity resembles the charity of those verbal philanthropists, who say, "be ye warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful."

We ought to lament that we have done so little to prove, I will not say the fervency, but even the sincerity of our prayers; and upon such an occasion as this, rather than embarrassing our minds with the conduct of God in the contracted limits of the gospel, it becomes us to examine ourselves to see whether we are not very guilty. The church of Christ should have burned with zeal while there was one heathen nation or town to convert. The Friend of sinners said to his apostles, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature." They were not to desist till they had fulfilled their extensive commission. The apostles understood this, they flew like angels, "having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth." The disciples dispersed; the gospel spread in every direction, and "mighty grew the word of God and prevailed." Pious men after them followed the noble example; carrying the gospel from city to city, and from province to province. This course should have been continued—but successors forgot the common object, stopped without endeavouring to make further progress, divided into parties, and contended with acrimony for their respective peculiarities. How little of the knowledge of the gospel have the heathens for ages derived from their connexion with evangelised nations? It has been justly observed, that this is the crying sin of Christian lands; a sin too of which they have been quite insensible; a sin never lamented in our sermons for national humiliation. Without using the means to save men, are we not chargeable with their blood? Is it not owing to our criminal indifference that millions are "sitting in darkness, and in the region of the shadow of death." Viewing ourselves in a national capacity, as Englishmen, the providence of God has furnished us with peculiar advantages for this service. Our arms and commerce have opened us a passage to the most distant parts of the globe—but our designs have not been formed with a view to benefit the heathens, while our conduct has left a bad impression of the Christian name. We have all been culpable; too long have we stood idle; we have not sought occasions, we have neglected opportunities. May our repentance obtain forgiveness, and produce diligence.—Let us with one heart and voice pray that the whole earth may be filled with the glory of our God. Let us spend our days and our lives in this blessed service.—It is better that it be in our heart to attempt the work, should our endeavours fail of success, than that we should be as indifferent to it as the supine Jews were to the rebuilding of the house of the Lord, which had long lain in ruins, under the notion that "the time is not come, the time that the Lord's house should be built."

We rejoice that a considerable number is formed into a society to make proof of the will of God respecting the conversion of the heathens. We rejoice that the well formed plan receives such general countenance and assistance. We rejoice in the harmony, liberality, prudence, and vigour which have been displayed. We rejoice that there are those whose zeal for the Lord of Hosts disposes to renounce the comforts of civilized life, to devote themselves to the service of savage tribes. We rejoice that there are those whose hearts have inclined them to engage in conducting them to the place of their destination—give commandment, O God, concerning their bones—say to the roaring winds and waves, "touch not mine anointed, and do my prophets no harm." We rejoice that, in a business of such moment, so many favourable circumstances concur to strengthen our hands and enliven our hopes. We will treat our discouragements with neglect, and our encouragements with gratitude. We have begun in the strength of the Lord, and his spirit enabling us, we will patiently endure. While others "despise the day of small things," "we will get our faith strengthened by the testimony of Jesus," and expect that "the little one shall become a thousand," and that the cloud, no bigger than a man's hand, shall increase and pour down showers upon the desert lands.—And thou, O God, whose mercies are over all thy works, and hatest nothing that thou hast made. O thou that lovest prayer, receive and answer our united supplications. "Be merciful unto us, and bless us; and cause his face to shine upon us. That thy way may be known upon earth, thy saving health upon all nations. Let the people praise thee, O God, let all the people praise thee."

THE MUTUAL DUTIES OF HUSBANDS AND WIVES:

A SERMON,

OCCASIONED BY

THE MARRIAGE OF R..... S....., ESQ. OF M.....

PREACHED IN ARGYLE-CHAPEL, BATH, AUGUST 16, 1801.

BY WILLIAM JAY.

ADVERTISEMENT.

It may be asked——Why is this Sermon published?

The Author has never been afraid to preach on moral subjects.—He despises the charge of Legality, and exceedingly dislikes the exclusive application of the term *Evangelical*, to *doctrinal* preaching.

He has also been accustomed to seize events, and circumstances, as they arise, to enliven attention, and diversify public instruction.—His much esteemed Friend, whose name he has been compelled to suppress in the title-page, having engaged to worship in his congregation, on the Sabbath previous to his espousals with an amiable young Female who had resided some months in the Author's family—he resolved to select a portion of Scriptrure suitable to the occasion. The occasion was particular, but the subject was general; he therefore enlarged, and delivered the following Discourse.—The same day he received a pressing solicitation from his friend to publish; soon after arrived a request, signed by a number of his people, in the name of the rest. The author respects their judgment, and owes much to their kindness and esteem. The peculiar delicacy and elegance with which these applications are drawn up, would induce him to expose them at length, did not their flattering relation to himself forbid.

It is hoped the Sermon will appear impartial; it was delivered without fear, and without flattery. Long as the discourse will be found, it was all spoken; the Preacher desiring the audience to exercise a little more patience than usual. He chose to address both at the same time, rather than reserve the duties of either husband or wife to another opportunity. As the author always preaches without notes, and had written only a general sketch of the subject, some few words and phrases may differ from those delivered in the pulpit; but the sense is completely, and the language nearly the same. Had the Sermon been designed for publication, or studied free from some peculiar interruptions and engagements, it might have been less unworthy of perusal.

Bath; August 24, 1801.

A SERMON.

Likewise, ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands, that if any obey not the word, they also may without the word be won by the conversation of the wives, while they behold your chaste conversation coupled with fear. Whose adorning, let it not be that outward adorning, of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel: but let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price. For after this manner in the old time, the holy women also who trusted in God adorned themselves, being in subjection unto their own husbands: even as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord: whose daughters ye are as long as ye do well, and are not afraid with any amazement. Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honour unto the wife as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered.—1 Pet. iii. 1—7.

THE Governor of the universe is perpetually varying and determining our duties, by the dispensations of his providence, the conditions in which he fixes us, and the connexions he leads us to form. Thus the whole Scripture is examined in succession, and every truth of the gospel obtains an application appropriate and impressive.

Marriage is an institution of peculiar importance. It is of divine ordination, and almost coeval with the existence of the human race. It is the origin of families; the source of the continuance and welfare of nations. It distinguishes man from the brute creation, excludes the disorders of licentiousness, and cherishes the sweetest affections of the heart. There is no union, the quality of which is so intimate, the obligation of which is so binding, the consequences of which are so momentous. It even surpasses natural relation, "and for this cause shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh; what therefore God hath joined together let not man put asunder."

Hence the opinion of those who would either banish or degrade marriage, has always been held by the wise and the virtuous, as a sentiment the most vile and injurious, equally destructive of morals and of social happiness. Hence many of the philosophers and legislators, even in the heathen world, were peculiarly solicitous to establish, to sanction, to encourage, and to regulate this institution. But in this, as well as in every other instance favourable to the welfare of mankind, the "gospel of our salvation" has the pre-eminence. It classes the prohibition of the ordinance with "the doctrine of devils," —assures us "marriage is honourable in all" —leads us back to its commencement in paradise—renders the bond indissoluble—places it under the jurisdiction of Heaven—takes from it an image to prefigure the union of CHRIST and his people—and often makes it the subject of particular instruction. It has given us advice, it has given us law—and where is this law so beautifully and largely expressed as in the passage I hold up to view this morning?

PART I. In the delineation of the duties resulting from marriage, our divine Instructor begins with WIVES—and to animate their attention to the rules he prescribes, he reminds them of the probability of their usefulness to their husbands in a case of all others the most interesting: "If any obey not the word, they MAY, without the word, be won."

Religion is not always universal, even in small detached portions of society. In the same house, there may be an heir of glory, and a son of perdition, natural alliance and spiritual disunion, persons living together in this world between whom, in eternity, there will be a great gulf fixed.

The instance of infidelity and ungodliness is taken from the man; and the apostle marks the piety of the wife, rather than of the husband.—Is this mentioned without design? Do not history, experience, and observation favour the probability? Have not women in all denominations, in all ages, in all countries, in all ranks, been more disposed to religion, than men?—From how many vices are females restrained by considerations which bear, much less forcibly, on the minds of men?—Who depends so much on opinion and esteem, or feels so many motives to preserve reputation unblemished?—Denied so often the liberty of divulging their emotions, Who so ready to seize the privilege of prayer, and to "pour out the heart before GOD?" —Who so susceptible of lively impressions? —Who feels so powerfully the thrilling of sympathy, or melts down so easily into all the tendernesses of benevolence?—While we think, they feel—while we deliberate, they relieve. What woman was ever destitute

of commiseration?—It was not a woman that unfeelingly, "looked on," or "passed by on the other side," when the poor traveller lay, wounded, bleeding, half-dead.—Who so accustomed to self-denial, the first, the last lesson, in the school of CHRIST?—Who feels such vicissitudes of health, or passes through scenes of pain and hazard so adapted to excite an entire dependence upon GOD, and to awaken solemn thought by bringing another world nearer the view?—Less occupied in the distracting concerns of business, she has more time for solitude and reflection. Her general sphere of action, is much more propitious to innocency and devotion. Her joys are more immediately derived from her virtues. Home is the chief place of her amusements. The tenderest cares of nature charm, as well as employ her. The mother is happy to press to her lips and to her bosom the babe she has borne—to feel the stroking hand of her suckling at her breast—to sit by the cradle of her infant daughter—to view from the window the manly exploits of her boy—or

> "Delightful task, to rear the tender thought,
> To teach the young idea how to shoot,
> To pour the fresh instruction o'er the mind,
> To breath th' enlivening spirit, and to fix
> The generous purpose in the glowing breast."—

Hence, how often do we see the sister, traveling a road, in which her brother refuses to accompany her; and the wife, living under the power of the gospel, while the husband neglects to hear, or hears with indifference. It were indeed to be wished that real Christians would never contract affinity with the irreligious: they are required to "marry in the LORD." The necessity of this law is more than justified, by the discords and miseries in which those involve themselves, who refuse to be governed by it. Therefore no countenance is here given to the practice of being "unequally yoked together with unbelievers." But a change may be effected subsequent to marriage. The wife may become religious, while the husband remains a stranger, or a foe. Now that which should prevent marriage, is not to dissolve it. The relation continues; and the wife, so far from being absolved from her obligation, is furnished with an additional motive to discharge it. "For what knowest thou, O wife, whether thou shalt save thy husband?" Let it excite all thy concern. The salvation of a soul! the salvation of a husband! of one endeared by so many ties!—O lose not each other in the "valley of the shadow of death." Let your friendship survive the desolations of time, and be renewed to infinite advantage beyond the grave. Think, O wife, of the happiness—the honour that awaits you. What is the triumph you have acquired over him by your charms, compared with the victory you will obtain over him by your religion?—What pleasure will attend the remainder of your days—now you are "of one heart and of one mind:" now you "take sweet counsel together." The privileged language of prayer now is OUR Father—of every motion made "to go and seek the LORD OF HOSTS," there is a ready acceptance—"I will go also." And what will "be your joy and crown of rejoicing" in that day when, before assembled men and angels, he will say, "O blessed be the Providence which attached us in yonder world, and has still more perfectly united us in this. The woman thou gavest to be with me" led me not to "the tree of knowledge of good and evil," but to "the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of GOD."

To encourage those who feel the painful affliction of ungodly relations, I would observe that, ultimately, we seldom see one individual only in a household called by grace. SHE may have the honour of being the first-fruits; but more, commonly follow. She may be long exercised before any favourable indications appear—but how often at last, are all her prayers heard, and her endeavours crowned with success, prejudices the most inveterate gradually give way; each is successively disposed to hear, till we see them all "going to the house of GOD in company." It is not possible for persons to be much together even in the exercises of common friendship, without impression and effect: we soon imbibe each other's dispositions, and assimilate: "he that walketh with wise men shall be wise, and a companion of fools shall be destroyed." But of all the causes which form our manners, none operates so powerfully as female intercourse. If confined entirely to their company, we become effeminate—if constantly excluded from it, we contract a roughness of temper, and a negligence of person; our behaviour assumes a ruder form, our voice a harsher tone; our sensations are less delicate, our passions more brutal. Who has so many avenues to the heart as a woman?—What influence affects like hers? By means of a connexion the most attractive, an intercourse the most familiar—the persuasion of words, the eloquence of tears, an example the most lovely and always placed in view—a wife has a thousand opportunities of removing prepossessions, of fixing impressions, of engaging attention, of insinuating goodness.—The gospel was spread over a large proportion of Europe, and established in several countries where it prevails to this day, chiefly by women, who, not satisfied with gaining thrones by their charms, rendered their attractions subservient to their religion, and drew over monarchs to the Christian faith. These are public, splendid achievements, immortalized in history. How many private instances of

this sanctified influence are there, unknown to the world, but recorded "in the book of God's remembrance." And if, my sisters, your example succeeds in the conversion of a husband from irreligion, shall it not be effectual to reclaim him from inferior mistakes and improprieties?—Shall it not advance godliness, where it is already found? Warm it where it is chilled? Polish it where it is rough? And, Finish it where it is outline?

And how is all this to be accomplished? Not by eccentric efforts—not by starting out of your sphere, but by exemplifying religion as you move orderly in it—not by preaching, but by living—addressing the eye rather than the ear—employing the eloquence which flows from subjection, conversation, chastity and fear—the manner in which you adorn yourselves—the models you design to imitate.

1. Nothing will increase your influence, and secure your usefulness, more than "being in SUBJECTION to your own husbands." This must, doubtless, be limited and qualified. If the demands of a husband oppose the will of GOD, you are pre-engaged by a law of universal operation, and "ought to obey GOD rather than man." In other cases, perhaps, it will not be so easy to furnish exceptions. "Therefore, as the church is subject unto CHRIST, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing."

There is a general rule, the spirit of which would easily settle every relative claim: "submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of GOD." But it cannot be denied, that a peculiar subjection is in the Scriptures required of the wife—not indeed the submission of slaves to their masters, or of subjects to their sovereign, or even of children to a father.—It has more of equality in it—accords with the idea of a helper, companion, friend—springs originally from choice—and is acquiesced in for the sake of propriety and advantage. For none of the determinations of GOD are capricious: all are founded in reason, and all are designed to promote both individual and social welfare. In this regulation has GOD acted partially? Has he sacrificed the happiness of the woman to the dignity of the man? Has he not equally regarded the interest of the wife, the children, and the connexions? In all communities, whether more or less extensive, there can be no happiness without peace, no peace without order, no order without subordination, no subordination without subjection. Perpetual strife would originate from equality, or contested superiority. Numberless contentions would arise, from diversity of views, from difference of temper, and perverse adherence to opposite plans, destroying the harmony and tranquillity of families. The only method by which these disorders can be either precluded or removed, is by establishing pre-

eminence and authority, and enjoining submission and acquiescence. This being indispensably necessary, the only question is, Where shall the power of decision be lodged?

From many considerations, expressive of the Divine will, the Scripture assigns this prerogative to the man.—Witness the priority of his creation: "For Adam was first formed, then Eve." Witness the manner in which he derived his being: "The man is not of the woman, but the woman of the man."—Witness his destiny: "For the man was not created for the woman, but the woman for the man." "And the LORD said, it is not good for man to be alone, I will make him a help meet for him." Witness his relation: "The man is the image and glory of GOD, but the woman is the glory of the man." Witness the entrance of sin: "Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived, was in the transgression." Witness the malediction denounced upon the woman: "Thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee." There was nothing originally like a curse in this demand. In Paradise, nothing oppressive or unreasonable, would have appeared in the requisition: and nothing mortifying, would have attended the performance. But the fall has shed the poison—sin has rendered it irksome.—The woman is disinclined to obey, while the man is often absurd in his designs, capricious in his temper, tyrannical in his claims, and degrading in his authority. But, my sisters, while you have reason, much reason to complain, remember, it is the consequence of sin, the sin of your own sex. Turn the curse into a blessing—derive real honour from seeming disgrace. You cannot dispense with this subjection, without opposing the express will of GOD, and violating the laws of marriage to which you have acceded by a voluntary engagement, and promised obedience in a manner the most solemn.

2. Much depends upon your "CONVERSATION." By this you are to understand all your behaviour, the whole course of your lives. Little is to be done by a single action, or an individual solitary excellence, while other things in the character, so far from aiding its impressions, counteract its tendency, or mar its effects. There is a connexion between duties and virtues: they enliven and enforce—they sustain and recommend each other. The strength of this moral chain to draw, depends upon the concatenation of the links; and the force of this spiritual beauty to strike and captivate, results from the union, harmony, and proportion of all the lineaments. One handsome feature all surrounded with ugliness, would excite disgust, or render deformity the more observable.

3. Your conversation is to be always distinguished by "CHASTITY and FEAR," and

these are to be "COUPLED." How natural, how necessary the alliance!

The apostle deems it needless to descend to the grossness of vice, or actual infractions of the marriage covenant. He would intimate, that where there are no such infamous degradations in your sex, there may be an audacity of countenance, a boldness of look, a levity of discourse, a freedom of manners, a forwardness of behaviour, a challenging, obtrusive, advancing air—very unbecoming the sacred decorum which should appear in all the female character. He therefore requires "FEAR."—It intends the reverse of every thing seen in too many of our modern females—diffidence, bashfulness; the blushings of reserve; the tremulous retiring of modesty; the sensation which arises from the union of innocency and danger; the carefulness which leads you to "avoid the appearance of evil;" the apprehension, that to be suspected is almost as bad as to be guilty; the prudence which keeps you far, very far from the extremities of permission; the vigilance which discerns and announces danger, while yet a great way off; the caution that never suffers the outguards to be called in, or the enemy to approach even near enough to reconnoitre. This, my fair hearers, will diffuse a glory over you, which never fails to charm, and upon all the glory will be a defence.

4. Much depends on the manner in which you adorn yourselves; whether you appear the votaries of vanity; or prize your souls; improve your minds; and govern your tempers. "Whose ADORNING, let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold and apparel: but let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible; even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of GOD of great price."

The sex which rendered clothing necessary, has always been too much disposed to glory in the memorial of our shame. Women have not the same mediums of address with men. They must succeed by means more silent and disguised. Discovery would often frustrate intention. They know their force lies in their beauty, and seize dress as an auxiliary; they increase natural attractions by artificial assistance. "Can a maid forget her ornaments, or a bride her attire?"

Peter knows what is too characteristical in the sex. What he despairs to alter, he labours to improve. Women MUST be fine; WILL be fine—He indulges them; only turning their attention from external decoration to internal accomplishment.—Not that he forbids a proper attention to the body. Nothing can be so despicable and disgusting as a slattern; though it has been remarked, that a propensity to it, is often found connected with a love of finery. The body is the work of GOD—the structure is "fearfully and wonderfully made."—It is a part of our nature—but it is the inferior part; and this should regulate the degree of attention. A woman of good sense, will always possess a better standard of dress in her own taste, than is to be derived from any precise rules.

She will avoid whatever would appear light and wanton. The apparel of "a woman professing godliness," should not be the attire of a woman of the world, much less, "the attire of a harlot." Females sometimes wear a label, on which indecency and indelicacy are written, and then appear to be offended because observers can read. I would not always infer too much of the disposition from these outward hints—but in the name of a blush, on what principle can we explain the invention or adoption of certain modes?—I describe nothing.

She will beware of exceeding her rank, and her circumstances, or even of reducing her means of beneficence. Shall I here avail myself of the season? How many miserable objects are there around you!—What an insult on the wretchedness of the times, is the dress of many extravagant females! My fair hearers, escape this censure. Remember Dorcas; enter yonder "upper chamber"—see the "widows standing and weeping, and showing the coats and garments which she made while she was with them."—What will afford you most pleasure when you come to die—the recollection of the property you employed in clothing the naked, or of that which you expended on costly folly? What satisfaction, resulting from the applause of finery, can equal the joy of benevolence a female feels, while moving among the tears, prayers, and benedictions of gratitude?—"When the ear heard me, then it blessed me—and when the eye saw me, it gave witness unto me."

She will keep it from engrossing too much of the mind; she will not suffer it to be either her business or delight—she will not render herself responsible at the bar of God for the awful waste of hours, weeks, months—shall I add, years! detached from a life as short as it is important, and the whole of which ought to be redeemed!

The apostle speaks comparatively.—He would teach women that they have souls—that they are made capable of greater beauty than the body yields—that they ought to adorn the mind—that their endeavours to decorate their persons should be infinitely surpassed by their attention to intellectual accomplishments—that they should be ambitious of moral endowments, and above all things, pay an attention to the "HEART."—For what are talents unsanctified?—"Knowledge puffeth up, but "charity edifieth."—What are notions the most sublime, and sentiments the most admired, if the disposition be not under the bias of religion? How defective will the

whole figure appear, without "the ornament of a MEEK AND QUIET SPIRIT?"—What so unsightly, so odious, as a discontented, fretful, foaming, boisterous, scolding woman? "A continual dropping in a very rainy day, and a contentious woman are alike." "It is better to dwell in the corner of a house-top than with a brawling woman in a wide house." "It is better to dwell in the wilderness than with a contentious and an angry woman. Whoso hideth her, hideth the wind and the ointment of his right hand, that bewrayeth itself." The Graces were female: so were the Furies too. Much depends on the cultivation of the mind; more on the regulation of the temper. The necessity of this qualification, in family connexion, is inconceivable. In managing the concerns of a household, how many things will perpetually arise to disappoint, to ruffle, to unhinge, to vex, and to provoke!—These require the command of temper. And there are wives, and there are wives in this assembly, who in "patience possess their souls"—who can feel, but retain their composure—who can calmly remonstrate, but know not to insist—who can yield and accommodate—who are "not easily provoked"—but "easily entreated:" who are disposed rather to endure than complain—and to suffer in secret, rather than disturb others with their grief.

Suffer me then, my fair hearers, to recommend this exchange, this preference of decoration. Like "the king's daughter, be all glorious within." Let the Bible be the mirror at which you dress; and while others are weightily engaged in catching a fashion, or adjusting a curl, let the object of your cultivation be the understanding, the memory, the will, the affections, the conscience. Let no part of this internal creation be unadorned: let it sparkle with the diamonds of wisdom, of prudence, of humility, of gentleness. These ornaments alone will confer dignity, and prepare for usefulness. If destitute of these, can you imagine it possible to obtain real durable regard? Need you be told, that these skin-deep perfections, these exterior senseless appendages, imply no excellency in the wearer, and are only admired by the weak, or the worthless? Are you ignorant that men often despise a soul lodged in a form they adore, and admire nonsense, because it is poured from handsome lips? Are you designed for toys, or rational beings? the playthings of the senses, or improving companions? Would you in company keep your husbands on thorns, while they wish you to be seen, and hope you will not be heard; knowing how much more likely you are to strike by the quality and pattern of your robes, than by the insipidity and inanity of your discourse!—Adorn yourselves in the newest mode, in the richest attire, plait your hair, deck yourselves with pearls—will these render you valuable?—Will these qualify you to manage the concerns of a family, "to give a portion to your maidens," to train up your children in wisdom and virtue, to be a helpmeet for your husband!—What! are you endued with reason and immortality, only to be enamoured with a piece of embroidery, or to pay your devotions to the colour of silk?—Are you sublimely resolved never, never to leave the world of fans, and enter the region of intelligence and of mind!

These decorations are "not CORRUPTIBLE." All other ornaments "perish in the using." All other attire gives place to the shroud. "Beauty consumes away like a moth"—the sparkling eye "is closed in darkness"—the body is "laid in the grave—death shall feed upon it." The charmer, looking in vain for admirers, says "to corruption, Thou art my father: to the worm, Thou art my mother and my sister."—Prolong life. Accidents may disfigure, and diseases corrode.—How quickly time changes the countenance!—How transient the empire of colours and of tints!—How soon wrinkles and gaudy attire disagree!—Having laid in no stock of mental influence, and sober entertainment against the evil day, what becomes of these delightful creatures?—A few years reduce them to insignificance, leaving them only the humiliating claims of pity, or the uncertain returns of gratitude.—But an accomplished pious woman, can never be the object of neglect—she will attract notice, and confer happiness, even when descending into the vale of years. The ravages of time cannot reach the soul: death cannot strip off the habits of immortality: it will only change her "from glory to glory:" only remove her from earth, unworthy of continuance, and place her among "the innumerable company of angels."

In adorning ourselves, the opinion of others is very influential; especally if the admirers discover taste, possess sway, or can give law to fashion. This decoration is in the SIGHT OF GOD of great price." "Not" she "who commendeth herself is approved, but whom the LORD commendeth." What is "the honour that cometh from man?" How wavering, how vain, how debasing!—But "the honour that cometh from GOD only," is purifying, satisfying, enduring. It is impossible to feel a complacency in ourselves, while conscious that we are disesteemed by a Being of infinite wisdom, excellency, and goodness. His "judgment is always according to truth." "In his favour is life;" on his applause our happiness depends—and in vain we approach him with any of those distinctions which dazzle and deceive mankind; for "the LORD taketh pleasure" only "in them that fear him, in them that hope in his mercy."

5. Much depends on the MODELS you choose for imitation. The apostle would have you conform, not to the flutterers of

fashion, not to the triflers of a day, who live only to please, and derive all their consequence from vanity—but an illustrious company of female worthies, who drew towards them the eye of GOD, who served their generation according to his will—who obtained a distinguished place in the annals of inspiration—whose names have been long glorified, and will be "had in everlasting remembrance." "A gracious woman retaineth honour." "Favour is deceitful and beauty is vain, but a woman that feareth the LORD, she shall be praised: give her of the fruit of her hands, and let her own works praise her in the gates."—"For after this manner in the old time, the holy women also who trusted in GOD adorned themselves, being in subjection to their own husbands: even as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord, whose DAUGHTERS ye are as long as ye do well, and are not afraid with any amazement." The honour of this alliance awaits you—however inferior in talents—however obscure in your stations—however poor in your circumstances—here is a passage, by which you may obtain a place in this glorious assembly, and sit down by the side of a Lydia, a Mary, a Hannah, a Deborah, a Sarah, "in the kingdom of GOD." For by what are these pious women distinguished?—By excellencies which fall within the reach of general imitation—by preferring the soul to the body—by meekness and gentleness—by modesty and reserve—by a ready submission to the demands of their stations.—Thus Sarah, though of the same family with her husband, and distinguished by peculiar honours, never rose above the most humble duties of her situation—never suffered even the princess, to injure the wife—and, willingly yielded Abraham reverence and obedience.

But in all these instances, you will never "do well," and become the "daughters" of Sarah, unless you maintain a holy MAGNANIMITY; "NOT BEING AFRAID WITH ANY AMAZEMENT"—so as to be staggered, confounded, dismayed, in the course of prescribed duty. There can be no impartial obedience, or unwavering perseverance in religion, without courage and confidence. The man needs it, the woman needs it: the husband requires it, and the wife equally requires it. It would be rendered still more necessary, were a period to arrive, in which every airy speculation would be preferred to practice; things important, because plain and of old standing, would be lightly esteemed; and nothing would strike, nothing be relished, unless dressed up in novelty, and seasoned with extravagance. Such, my female friends, is the period in which we live. Many of the things which we have been recommending on sacred ground, would be considered as barbarous notions, as ignorance of the world, prejudices which philosophy would cure, the airs of hypocrisy, the effects of prudishness. Can you form yourselves by these rules? Can you encounter opinion? Can you bear the charge of singularity? Can you abandon the multitude, laughing or lampooning as you retire? Can you live according to the dictates of reason, of conscience, and of GOD?—Be principled—be decided—be resolved—be firm. Having formed your views in the divine presence, and feeling all your motives, go forth, and be steadfast and unmoveable, in the execution; "always abounding in the work of the LORD."

There is another instance in which these pious women exercised confidence—depending on the providence of GOD, staying themselves by faith on his promises; and thus looking forward with a firm unruffled mind towards those trying, painful, perilous events which were expected to befall them. The Scripture, with its usual tenderness, furnishes the woman with this soothing, tranquillizing hope, in prospect of a season the most anxious—"Notwithstanding she shall be saved in child-birth, if they continue in faith and charity, and holiness, with sobriety."

PART II. MEN AND BRETHREN, you have been hearing my address to the companions of your lives. But I hope you deem instruction equally necessary for yourselves. I hope you are not inclined to take advantage of the subject, to abuse your authority or your claims. Be assured they are not unqualified. If the wife is to be governed by you, you are to be governed by reason and religion. If she is to submit, you are to honour. If in some things there is a difference, in others, and those too the most interesting and durable, there is an equality. "Likewise, ye HUSBANDS, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honour unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel; and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered." Observe, my brethren, 1st, the representation of your duty; and, 2dly, the motives by which it is enforced.

The representation of your duty comprehends two things.

1. You are to "DWELL with them ACCORDING TO KNOWLEDGE." This intends nothing less than residence, opposed to absence and roving. It is absurd for those who have no prospect of cohabitation to enter this state, and those who are already in it, should not be unnecessarily abroad. Circumstances of various kinds will doubtless render occasional excursions unavoidable; but let a man return as soon as the design of his absence is accomplished, and let him always travel with the words of Solomon in his mind, "As a bird that wandereth from her nest, so is a man that wandereth from his place." Can a man while from home, discharge the duties he owes to his household? Can he discipline

his children? Can he maintain the worship of GOD in his family?—I know it is the duty of the wife to lead the devotion in the absence of the husband; and she should take it up as a cross, if not for the time as a privilege. Few however are thus disposed, and hence one of the sanctuaries of GOD, for weeks and months together is shut up.—I am sorry to say, that there are some husbands who seem fonder of any society than the company of their wives. It appears in the disposal of their leisure hours. How few of these are appropriated to the wife! The evenings are the most domestic periods of the day. To these the wife is peculiarly entitled—she is now most free from her numerous cares, and most at liberty to enjoy reading and conversation. It is a sad reflection upon a man when he is fond of spending his evenings abroad. It implies something bad, and it predicts something worse.

But though the apostle intends nothing less than residence, he designs much more. Residence is required with a view to the performance of all the duties of the state—and is used to express them. In the discharge of these obligations, the husband is to act "according to knowledge"—to "behave" himself "wisely," to regulate all his proceedings, by a holy discretion. O ye husbands, show that you are capable of the relation in which you are placed! If you will be the head, remember the head is not only the seat of government, but of knowledge. If you will have the management of the ship, see that a fool is not placed at the helm. Shall the blind offer themselves as guides? To enable you to live as a Christian husband, in how many instances will the exercise of an enlightened prudence be found necessary! By this you are to ascertain the temper, the excellencies, the foibles of your associates. This is to teach you, how to accommodate. This is to show you, when to see as if you saw not, and to hear as if you heard not. This is to tell you how to extinguish the torch of discord; how even to prevent the kindling of strife—when to give up, when to recede from a lawful claim for the sake of a greater good. This is to teach you also when you are NOT to yield.—Adam, to indulge the solicitation of his wife, disobeyed the commands of Heaven. By the same soft, seducing instrumentality, the heart of Solomon was turned aside from "GOD." Their sad examples have been unhappily, too often followed. But would she force upon you her antipathies—would she embroil you in all the resentments of caprice, or rivalry—would she allure you towards scenes of dissipation and gaiety—would she urge you to extravagance in appearances, dress, table, furniture—would she chill you with suspicions, and render you less generous—the importunity of woman, "lovely woman," is to be in vain.

"He that loveth" even—"his WIFE more than me, is not worthy of me."

2dly. You are to "give HONOUR unto the wife."—What honour?

The honour of ESTEEM. This is to arise from a consciousness of her worth, and a knowledge of her importance in the community—in the family—and to yourselves—by polishing your character, dividing your cares, soothing your sorrows, affording you in a peaceful home a refuge from the storm, an asylum from the mortifications of an unfriendly world.

The honour of ATTACHMENT. This affection is to be peculiar, undivided, unrivalled. Nothing is to wear it away—nothing to diminish it: no length of time, no discovery of imperfection. Children are parts of yourselves, but your wives ARE yourselves. "No MAN ever yet hated his own flesh:"—but many a MONSTER has done so. I disdain to notice those miscreants, who can have recourse to blows; but those who can indulge in a churlishness of behaviour—a sharpness of language—an unkindness of looks, would do well to consider how far they are complying with the divine command—"Husbands, love your wives, and be not bitter against them."

The honour of ATTENTION. Nothing is so intolerable to a female as neglect; and upon what principle can a man justify indifference, omissions of observance, and heedless manners towards a WIFE? Has he not chosen her?—Has he not declared his preference?—Are not the vows of God upon him?—Is she not the chief relation he possesses on earth?

The honour of CONFIDENCE. You are not to proceed without their knowledge and advice. In many cases their opinion may be preferable to your own. Their judgment may be less clouded by interest: they stand back from the object, you are too near; they are cool and calm, you, by being in the scene, are ruffled, and inflamed. An eminent minister of the gospel has published to the world, "That he had never in any particular business acted contrary to the suggestions of his wife, without having reason afterwards to repent of it." I believe there are many who are restrained from similar acknowledgments only by a want of candour. Some husbands never consult their wives; or even deign to inform them: and their wives have often to learn from others, or from events, things in which perhaps they are most deeply concerned.

The honour of MAINTENANCE. You are to provide for them, and enable them to appear becoming their rank and situation in life.—What can we think of the man who squanders away his substance upon his lewd or his drunken appetites, reduces his wife to a drudge, and suffers her with her babes to struggle with the hardships of penury, unable

to procure a sufficiency of food, or raiment? —"If any provide not for his own, and especially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel."

The honour of BENEVOLENCE. You are to enable her to do good.—Every man should devote a proportion of his property to charitable uses, and he should not by his distribution of the whole, draw towards himself all the regards of the relieved and obliged. His wife should command a share of the means and of the honour.—Husbands! give your wives these proofs of regard which reason and revelation demand for them, and we shall soon hear less of your reflections and complaints.

Observe, 2dly, the motives by which this duty is enforced. They are three.

The first is taken from the natural condition of the sex. "SHE IS THE WEAKER VESSEL." If this be mentioned as a reason to excite a becoming behaviour towards the wife, there can be nothing in the expression degrading, nothing that tends to diminish the honour we are bound to show them—nothing that is not adapted, when properly considered, to promote it. No invidious comparisons are here justified between the powers of the mind. Whether there would be any disparity, were females placed in the same circumstances—indulged with the same advantages—and allowed to feel the same motives with their brethren, it would be needless to determine. They have taken good care often to prove, that the difference is not so vast as some male-monopolists are willing to suppose.—The reference is obvious and striking. Nature is always wise. It gives more strength where it is necessary—and less, where other qualities supersede it. Milton has finely expressed the difference in the original pair:

> "For contemplation he and valour form'd,
> For softness she and sweet attractive grace."

Her bodily strength is inferior, her constitution less firm and vigorous, her frame more tender, her temper more yielding, her circumstances more generally depressing. A rose, a lily, allows of no rough usages. Tenderness demands gentleness: delicacy, care: pliancy, props. Has a condition fewer resources, and is there much in it of the afflictive and humbling? The more does it need succour, and the more necessary is every assistance to maintain and increase the consequence of it, especially where so much depends upon the respectability of the character who fills it.—Where is the man who is not alive to this consideration?—Where is the husband, who reflecting on her peculiar circumstances, would not be disposed by every possible means to promote the dignity, and the satisfaction of a wife?—What is the language of these circumstances?—"Honour us; deal kindly with us. From many of the opportunities, and means by which you procure favourable notice, we are excluded. Doomed to the shades, few of the high places of the earth are open to us. Alternately we are adored, and oppressed. From our slaves, you become our tyrants. You feel our beauty, and avail yourselves of our weakness. You complain of our inferiority, but none of your behaviour bids us rise. Sensibility has given us a thousand feelings, which nature has kindly denied you.—Always under restraints, we have little liberty of choice. Providence seems to have been more attentive to enable us to confer happiness, than to enjoy it.—Every condition has for us fresh mortifications; every relation new sorrows. We enter social bonds; it is a system of perpetual sacrifice. We cannot give life to others, without hazarding our own. We have sufferings which you do not share, cannot share.—If spared, years and decays invade our charms, and much of the ardour produced by attraction departs with it.—We may die.—The grave covers us, and we are soon forgotten: soon are the days of your mourning ended, soon is our loss repaired: dismissed even from your speech, our name is to be heard no more; a successor may dislike it—Our children, after having a mother by nature, may fall under the control of a mother by affinity, and be mortified by distinctions made between them, and her *own* offspring.—Though the duties which we have discharged invariably, be the most important and necessary, they do not shine: they are too common to strike: they procure no celebrity: the wife, the mother fills no historic page. Our privations, our confinements, our wearisome days, our interrupted, our sleepless nights, the hours we have hung in anxious watchings over your sick and dying offspring."—

Behold a second motive. It is derived from the dignity of the wife as a mutual partaker of the privileges of the gospel.—No inequality reigns here. It is a "common salvation." Are you, O man, an "HEIR of the GRACE of LIFE?" So are they—heirs TOGETHER WITH YOU—in the same degree—having the same claims—the same hopes—the same reversions. "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female, for ye are all one in Christ Jesus."—Can a woman be an infidel!—What self-degradation. Need she be told HER obligations to Christianity? What has raised her so high in the scale of importance? What system has done such justice to her claims? In what country have the provisions of legislation lost sight of the distinction of male and female; looked at both with the same aspect, rendered the one as personally responsible as the other, and entitled them equally to the same rights and privileges?—When a woman steps on this sacred ground, she becomes free—she is her own;

she is a party, she treats for herself. Here, my sisters, your reproach is rolled away. We see one of your sex bringing forth "IMMANUEL, GOD with us." We see the angels of heaven bringing you messages, and performing for you miracles. We see you last at the cross, and first at the tomb of our common LORD. We see JEHOVAH listening to your supplications, and maintaining your cause. We see you "the DAUGHTERS of the LORD ALMIGHTY." We see you redeemed with an infinite price—destined to possess a "far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory," and hastening to partake of a resurrection in which they "neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of GOD in heaven."

A third reason is drawn from those devotional exercises which cannot be properly performed where relative duty is not observed —"That your PRAYERS be not hindered." It is impossible for a Christian to live without prayer. He prays alone, and he prays with others. The field, the temple, the closet, the family, are all with him places "where prayer is wont to be made."

How necessary is prayer in the marriage state. How does social devotion sweeten social life! It obtains strength for its duties, and succour for its trials. It gives a direction to the mind, by which we escape numberless snares; an elevation, by which we rise above a thousand vexations. How it sanctifies our comforts! How it prepares the soul for disappointment or success! How it calls down the blessing of Heaven to "attend the labour of our hand!" How it attracts the divine presence, and places Him within our reach "who is nigh unto all them that call upon him; to all that call upon him in truth" —Of a prayerful habitation it may be said, How glorious is this place! "This is none other than the house of GOD, and this is the gate of heaven!" "The voice of rejoicing and of salvation is in the tabernacles of the righteous." O happy mansion! where all the members of the family "dwell together in unity"—living with each other here, as those who expect to be associates for ever; maintaining a friendship the centre of which is religion, the duration of which is eternity, the bonds of which are "faith and love which are in Christ Jesus."

Guard, therefore, against every thing injurious to the service of GOD in your families. Let nothing hinder its exercise. Let nothing prevent its fervour. Let nothing destroy its freedom. Let nothing frustrate its efficacy. Let nothing limit, or even delay its success. Let your whole conversation be consistent with devotion, or preparatory to it. Avoid whatever renders an introduction into the Divine presence less easy, or less delightful. Keep open a passage wide enough to advance together to the throne of grace. Go hand in hand into his presence: "Agree, touching the things you shall ask, and it shall be done for you of our heavenly Father."

In reviewing the subject, I would beseech you, my dear hearers, to remember—That those who make light of moral and relative duties, contemn the will of GOD. "He knows what is in man," and what is necessary to him. Every condition lies open to his view. He sees how things blend, and how they issue; how they oppose, or how they aid each other. Though invisible to us, he sees the worm that lies at the root of our social happiness: we wonder at the effect, he sees the cause, and would remove it. He has condescended to speak: we have HIS judgment relative to every station and relation in life. He speaks as a sovereign who has authority to command, and he speaks as a friend who consults your welfare, and "takes pleasure in the prosperity of his servants."

Again. We have reason to lament, that there is such a general deficiency among professors of religion, with regard to those duties which they owe to each other. Many, to show their love to the gospel, testify their indifference to the law. Numbers are too orthodox, or too devotional, to be moral. Morality is below their faith, or their raptures. Various things their system has taught them; but one thing it has not taught them, one thing it does not require them to learn—"to deny all ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present world." Shall ministers, by their silence, be accessary to this corruption of manners, this awful perversion of religion?—Let them "affirm, constantly, that they which have believed in GOD, must be careful to maintain good works. These things are good and profitable unto men."

Let those who stand already in the marriage relation, be willing to know, and to practise the duties which spring from it.—Enter, my brethren and sisters, the temple of revelation—bow before the divine oracle—say, "LORD, what wilt thou have ME to do?" "Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth." Extract from the Scripture, the mind of GOD concerning yourselves individually. Take home the words I have been explaining. Read. Compare. Resolve. Reform. Let not husbands take away the duties of the wife, nor wives the duties of the husband; but let both take respectively their own, and say, "O that my feet were directed to keep thy statutes." "I have chosen the way of truth, thy judgments have I laid before me." "Through thy precepts I get understanding, therefore I hate every false way." "I have sworn, and I will perform it, that I will keep thy righteous judgments."

Let the young think of this, and let it influence their choice. Let those think of it, who are approaching this holy state. By

many it is totally overlooked; and they contract marriages on considerations purely accidental, or worldly—as if they wished to marry, not to be happy; to gain each other, not to enjoy. Who forms this alliance as a Christian! Who enters it with those views and motives the gospel supplies? Who consults GOD in the undertaking? Who has the banns published in heaven to ascertain what impediments are pleaded there? Thus persons are often unsuitably bound together by an engagement, which can only be dissolved by death, that comes to release them from one prison, and conduct them into another.—

But may I not congratulate others?—MY BELOVED FRIENDS, in this important concern, YOU have done nothing without asking counsel of the LORD. By faith and prayer, I am persuaded you have engaged that Saviour who was present at the marriage of Cana in Galilee, to honour your approaching nuptials; and under the influence of his gracious Spirit, your mutual affections shall increase with time, and shine bright to all eternity.—I look forward and see you blessing and blessed. I see you "walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless." I see your "children like olive-plants around your table." I see you endeavouring to form them into characters, and to "train them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." I see you resigning each other with the feelings and hopes of Christians.—"For this I say, the time is short: It remaineth, therefore, that both they that have wives, be as though they had none; and they that weep, as though they wept not; and they that rejoice, as though they rejoiced not; and they that buy, as though they possessed not; and they that use this world, as not abusing it: for the fashion of this world passeth away;" and you are hastening from the altar to the tomb.

REFLECTIONS ON VICTORY:

A SERMON

PREACHED IN ARGYLE-CHAPEL, BATH, DECEMBER 5, 1805;

Being the day appointed for a general Thanksgiving; for the Signal Victory obtained under the late Lord Viscount Nelson, over the Combined Fleet of the Enemy.

BY WILLIAM JAY.

ADVERTISEMENT.

A SERMON presented to the eye from the Press, is submitted to a severer test than a Sermon only heard from the Pulpit.

A Sermon impressive in the delivery is generally less interesting in the perusal, having no longer the advantage of a number of auxiliary feelings and circumstances.

These obvious reflections would have hindered the Author from sending abroad a discourse composed in haste, and with no view to publication, had it not been for two counter motives.

One of which is taken from the expediency of seizing events as they occur, and of turning to utility present impressions.

The other is derived from importunity. It is no easy thing to refuse a people endeared by a thousand attentions and kindnesses.—The Author, therefore, has yielded to the warm and unanimous solicitations of a large and highly esteemed congregation: and begs leave only to observe—that the sermon they will now read, is more than substantially the same with the sermon they have lately heard: few sentences are altered: the free and popular style of the pulpit is retained.

The substance of the prayer is also inserted by desire.

PRAYER BEFORE SERMON.

O GOD thou art very great, thou art clothed with honour and majesty; thou coverest thyself with light as with a garment; thou ridest upon the wings of the wind. When we reflect upon the glory of thy majesty, we are astonished at thy infinite condescension in designing to notice creatures so mean and so vile as we are. What is man that thou art mindful of him, and the Son of man that thou visitest him. We have thought of thy lovingkindness, O Lord, in the midst of thy temple; and are again assembled together to call upon our souls, and all that is within us, to bless and praise thy holy name.

We rejoice that thy throne is in the heavens, and that thy kingdom ruleth over all; that we are under the empire of a Being not only almighty, but perfectly righteous and wise and good; that all things in our world are appointed and arranged by thee; that thy Providence numbers the very hairs of our head; and that a sparrow falleth not to the earth without our heavenly Father.

Hitherto hath the Lord helped us. We bless thee for personal mercies. If we are called, it is by thy word. If we are renewed, it is by thy Spirit. If we are justified, it is freely by thy grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. It is in thee we live, move, and have our being. Thy goodness has been always to listen to our complaints, to soothe our sorrows, and to rescue us from dangers. And numberless are the instances of lovingkindness that now, from ignorance or inattention, escape our notice, the discovery of which will awaken our songs when we mingle with those that dwell in thy house above, and are still praising thee.

We thank thee for relative mercies; for blessings on our families, blessings on our

churches, and blessings on the country to which we belong. We confess that we are not worthy of the least of all the mercies and of all the truth which thou hast shown us. Sins of every kind and degree have reigned among us; have spread through all ranks; and continued through all warnings and corrections; and if thou shouldest deal with us after our sins, or reward us according to our iniquities, we should no longer have a name and a place among the nations of the globe.

But while to us belong shame and confusion of faces, to thee, the Lord our God, belong mercies and forgiveness. All thy dispensations towards us have said with a tenderness that ought to penetrate our hearts, How shall I give thee up, O England! Our privileges never improved, and forfeited times without number, have been continued. We still behold our Sabbaths, and our eyes see our teachers. Our constitution, endeared by comparison, has been preserved; our civil liberties and laws, marked by their justice and mildness, have not been subverted; and still we sit under our own vines, and under our own fig trees, none daring to make us afraid. Thou hast given us rains and fruitful seasons; thou hast filled us with the finest of the wheat; our garners have been full, affording all manner of store; our oxen have been strong to labour; our sheep have brought forth thousands and ten thousands in our streets. Thou hast spread thy wing, and sheltered us from the pestilence that walketh in darkness, and the destruction that rageth at noonday. We have not been permitted to hear the confused noise of warriors, nor to see garments rolled in blood—it has not come nigh us. Our enemies have often threatened to swallow us up, but thou hast frustrated their designs; and brought into conflict, thou hast given us a succession of victories—the greatest of which we have the happiness this day to acknowledge.

O! that men would praise the Lord for his goodness and for his wonderful works to the children of men! By these cords of love draw us to thyself. By thy mercies may we present our bodies a living sacrifice holy and acceptable, which is our reasonable service. After such a deliverance as this, may we no more break thy commandments. May we never convert our blessings into instruments of provocation, by their nourishing pride and arrogance, and self-confidence, and presumption; so as to compel thee to complain.—Do ye thus requite the Lord, O foolish people, and unwise! I have nourished and brought children, and they have rebelled against me.

With all our gratitude and joy may we remember what reasons we have also for sorrow and humiliation. O give us that repentance that is unto life. O reform our manners and forgive our sins. And suffer us to plead for a continuance of thy goodness. On thee we depend for our preservation and deliverance. O! disperse the clouds that hang over us. Mingle not a perverse spirit in the midst of us, but in such a period of danger may we feel as the heart of one man. May we not grow impatient under the pressure of needful burdens; nor ever suffer our trials to make us insensible to our comforts.

Let the king live before thee. Upon his head may the crown long flourish. Be his consolation and support under the weight of growing years, of bodily infirmities, and of national anxieties. Bless him in his royal consort; and in all the branches of his illustrious family. Bless him in his counsels. Impart to those who are at the helm of public affairs, that wisdom that is profitable to direct; and let all who are in stations of public trusts be faithful to public interests. May all the various classes of our community pursue that righteousness which exalteth a nation, and forsake that sin which is a reproach to any people. And as all events are under thy control, and all hearts are at thy command, open, we beseech thee, a way for the termination of hostility, and the restoration of peace.

For, O God, we would always deplore the necessity of war; we would weep over its calamities, we would sigh even over its successes. We must bedew our own victory with tears, in the loss of so many of our fellow-creatures and of our fellow-citizens, and in the mournful death of our distinguished leader. God of peace wipe away our tears. Cause the triumphs and the horrors of war to cease. Return, O Lord, how long? and let it repent thee concerning thy servants. O satisfy us early with thy mercy; that we may rejoice and be glad all our days. Make us glad according to the days wherein thou hast afflicted us, and the years wherein we have seen evil. Let thy work appear unto thy servants, and thy glory unto their children. And let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us; and establish thou the work of our hands upon us; yea, the work of our hands establish thou it. Our Father which art in heaven, &c

REFLECTIONS ON VICTORY.

And the victory that day was turned into mourning.—2 Sam. xix. 2.

"MAN that is born of a woman is of few days, and full of trouble." Even our joys as well as our sorrows proclaim, "this is not your rest," and call upon us to "arise and depart." For

> "——Roses grow on thorns,
> And honey wears a sting."

There are two great diminutions of all our present enjoyments. The one arises from change and disappointment. Have we health? To-morrow we may be laid on "a bed of languishing." Have we substance? "Riches make to themselves wings and flee away." Have we honour? Our laurel withers in wearing, or is torn off from the brow. Alas! how many in speaking of their possessions and comforts are constrained to refer to them as *past*. One cries, I *had* a business—another, I *had* a father—a third, I *had* a child.

The other springs from imperfection and alloy. Even allowing certain objects to be attained and secured; on how many conditions depends the pleasure of enjoyment? The absence of one agreeable quality; or the presence of one disagreeable circumstance, will be sufficient to spoil all the relish of our bliss; and even to excite vexation and disgust. A favour was shown me, and had it been given tenderly, it would have been pleasing: had it come earlier—it would have been useful: but it was given ungraciously; it came too late. There we see a man who has large estates to leave behind him—but he goes childless. Here we behold a numerous offspring—but the means of subsistence fail. And when Haman "came home he sent and called for his friends, and Zeresh his wife. And Haman told them of the glory of his riches, and the multitude of his children, and all the things wherein the king had promoted him, and how he had advanced him above the princes and servants of the king. Haman said moreover, Yea, Esther the queen did let no man come in with the king unto the banquet that she had prepared but myself; and to-morrow am I invited unto her also with the king. Yet all this availeth me nothing, so long as I see Mordecai the jew sitting at the king's gate." The Israelites went three days from the borders of the Red Sea, and "found no water:" they came to Marah, "and could not drink of the water because it was bitter." A true representation, says Bishop Hall, of a wilderness state, where we are always complaining even of our trials or of our indulgences; and where Providence so taxes every happiness, that our fruitfulness differ but little from our wants.

> "No; 'tis in vain to seek for bliss,
> For bliss can ne'er be found—
> 'Till we arrive where Jesus is,
> And tread that heavenly ground."

My brethren, I have read a sentence from the sacred history that affords another exemplification of this truth, whether we consider its original reference, or its present application.

AND THE VICTORY WAS TURNED THAT DAY INTO MOURNING.—Victory is our present subject; and we invite your attention while we consider—I. Those victories that terminate in joy—and II. Those that are attended with sorrow.

Yes—my brethren, there are victories that terminate in joy; and such was

First. Our Redeemer's victory over all his enemies and ours. Ah! what a struggle had he, to conquer those who had ruined mankind, and spread misery over the creation of God. "He looked and there was none to help; and he wondered that there was none to uphold: therefore his own arm brought salvation unto him; and his fury upheld him." He interposed and succeeded—and his success was the more remarkable, as it seemed to spring from actual defeat. In fighting he fell. The enemy, sure of victory, shouted. But his triumph was short. How often and how truly have we exclaimed,

> "I sing my Saviour's wonders, death
> He conquered when he fell,
> 'Tis finished'—said his dying breath,
> And shook the gates of hell."

"Now is the judgment of this world: now is the prince of this world cast out." And this victory issued in joy to himself. He had his eye upon it all through the conflict: for "the joy that was set before him, he endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God." It was the assured reward of his sufferings; "He shall see of the travail of his soul and shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many: for he shall bear their iniquities. Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he hath poured out his soul unto

death: and he was numbered with the transgressors; and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors." It is thus "he draws all men unto him:" It is thus he gains the hearts and the praises of all those for whom he bled and died; who, while here, glory only in his cross; who, in heaven behold "his scars of love, and kindle to a flame"—and who, through endless ages will adore "saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing." For it ends also in joy to his people.—What days of suspense and despair were those that passed, while he was silent in the tomb! For he had gone to assail the King of terrors in his own dark dominions, and he said as he entered, "O death I will be thy plagues, O grave I will be thy destruction, repentance shall be hid from mine eyes." And will he return? said his angels and desponding followers. Yes. On the third hallowed morning he comes forth all life and immortality. "Then were the disciples glad when they saw the Lord." "The Lord is risen indeed" was their song, and their salvation. And they went forth and said, "We declare unto you glad tidings, how that the promise which was made unto the fathers, God hath fulfilled the same unto us their children, in that he hath raised up Jesus again; as it is also written in the second psalm, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee. And as concerning that he raised him up from the dead, now no more to return to corruption, he said on this wise, I will give you the sure mercies of David."

And how was the intelligence received? Not coldly, but with gladness of heart. How was it heard in Samaria? "There was great joy in that city." How did the Galatians receive it? With blessedness; "where is the blessedness, says the apostle, ye spake of! For I bear you record, that if it had been possible ye would have plucked out your own eyes and have given them to me." How did the Thessalonians embrace it? They "received the word in much affliction with joy of the Holy Ghost." And why do not you give it the same welcome? Is it not of the same importance to you, as it was to them? Does it not abound with the same exceeding great and precious promises? Does it not open the same prospects to your hopes? Does it not bring the same reflection to your necessities?—Why then does not this victory equally enliven and rejoice you?

What would have been the consequence, if he had not fought; if he had not conquered? We should have become a prey to the teeth. And the miseries they would have inflicted upon us, infinitely surpass all the evils we can endure from the successes of our foes. These combined enemies would have robbed us of all spiritual liberty and property; of every divine relation and enjoyment: they were sworn to destroy both body and soul for ever. "But be of good cheer, He has overcome the world!" "The Lion of the tribe of Judah has prevailed!" "His right hand and his holy arm have gotten him the victory." Proclaim it to the ends of the earth. Let it reach, O Christian, every wretched corner of thy trembling soul.

> "Hell and thy sins resist thy course,
> But hell and sin are vanquish'd foes;
> Thy Jesus nailed them to the cross,
> And sung the triumph when he rose.

Let there be "light in all your dwellings." Let every tongue be filled with rapture. "Sing unto him, sing psalms unto him: talk ye of all his wondrous works. Glory ye in his holy name: let the hearts of those rejoice that seek the Lord."

"How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace; that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion, thy God reigneth!" Let us pass from the victory of Christ to the victory of the Christian. For the Christian is a soldier, and he wars "a good warfare." His cause is righteous, his alliance is almighty, his success is sure, and he "joys before the Lord as men rejoice when they divide the spoil."

Nothing perhaps strikes us more powerfully than military grandeur. Johnson has somewhere remarked, that were you in a room with a company of philosophers, and there came in Charles XII. of Sweden, or Frederick the Great, every eye would instantly be drawn off from the former, and fastened on the latter. Indeed the glory that attends the conqueror is so dazzling, that it unhappily prevents our observing sufficiently the wickedness of his character, the injustice of his means, and wretchedness of his exploits. But it is the moral hero the Scripture calls upon us to admire; it is the man that subdues *himself*. "He that is slow to anger is greater than the mighty, and he that ruleth his own spirit, than he that taketh a city." There is no skill like this; no valour like this; no glory like this; no joy like this. Have you ever been enabled by Divine grace to subdue a rebellious passion? For instance, when stimulated to revenge, have you resisted and "overcome evil with good?" what a serenity filled the mind? what a delicious sensation of kindness spread through the heart? It was a proof by dignified feeling, that "it is the glory of a man to pass by a transgression." It was a little approximation to Deity, to him, who is "slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy."

We may say the same of every moral conquest. Such victory nothing can embitter. It yields a pleasure the most pure, the most generous, the most durable. It will bear

examination and review. It will abide a dying hour. It will live in eternity. It is an angel that brings the wreath. It is God himself that approves and applauds. "He that overcometh shall inherit all things, and I will be his God, and he shall be my son."

Here, indeed, the believer's victory is imperfect: he will be annoyed even to the end of life; and hence his happiness is proportionably incomplete: "while without are fightings, within are fears." But a full and a final triumph awaits him. The *last* enemy, (O blessed termination of the war) the *last* enemy shall be destroyed—and he shall "always triumph in Christ." "This corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting! O grave, where is thy victory. The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ."

Happy Christian! the victory of that day shall never be turned into mourning. Thou art more than a conqueror through him that loved thee. "There shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away." "Sing, O daughter of Zion; shout, O Israel; be glad and rejoice with all the heart, O daughter of Jerusalem. The Lord hath taken away thy judgments, he hath cast out thine enemy: the king of Israel, even the Lord, is in the midst of thee: thou shalt not see evil any more."

Are all such victories?

No, my brethren!—not such are the victories of the young man, who overcomes the force of a pious education, the scruples of a tender conscience, the admonitions of friendship, the restraints of fear and shame.

Not such are the victories of the seducer, who accomplishes, O cruel success! the infamy and ruin of innocence and weakness; and forces a wretched and defenceless being to groan "and I, whither shall I cause my shame to go?"

Not such are the victories of the infidel, who can boast, O hellish triumph! of the number of victims whose principles he has poisoned, whose hearts he has corrupted, and whose comforts he has destroyed.

Are all such victories? No, my brethren; there are some that are attended with sorrow. And to approach more nearly to the business of the day, such was the victory of Joab—such, in some respects, are all national victories—and such, in a memorable circumstance, is the victory we are assembled to improve.

First. David by the skill and valour of his troops under the command of Joab, had gained a complete victory. Nothing could be more seasonable or important. It crushed the widespread rebellion, and reduced his subjects to their allegiance.—But behold the king, all suspense, sitting between the two gates, waiting for intelligence, two messengers run to announce the victory. "And Ahimaaz called, and said unto the king, All is well. And he fell down to the earth upon his face before the king, and said, Blessed be the Lord thy God, which hath delivered up the men that lifted up their hand against my lord the king. And the king said, Is the young man Absalom safe? And Ahimaaz answered, When Joab sent the king's servant, and me thy servant, I saw a great tumult, but I knew not what it was." "And behold, Cushi came; and Cushi said, Tidings, my lord the king: for the Lord hath avenged thee this day of all them that rose up against thee. And the king said unto Cushi, Is the young man Absalom safe? And Cushi answered, The enemies of my lord the king, and all that rise against thee to do thee hurt, be as that young man is." Nothing could have been more wise and delicate than the manner in which the truth was insinuated—but like a sword it pierced through David's soul. "And the king was much moved, and went up to the chamber over the gate, and wept: and as he went, thus he said, O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom! would God I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son!"

David was doubtless in some measure to blame. It was surely wrong in him not to notice as they returned, the brave men who had jeoparded their lives in the high places of the field for his safety. But O! who can help—at least what parent can help excusing, if not justifying his conduct. David stood in a double relation. He was not only the king, but the father. And though Absalom had been undutiful, still—he was a child—and for children to be cut off, not only in the midst of his days—but in the midst of his sins! Excuse David or condemn, the event was the same—"The people gat them by stealth that day into the city, as people being ashamed steal away when they flee in battle; and the victory that day was turned into mourning."

And, secondly, my brethren, this is true in some respects of every national victory. In order to see this, it is necessary for us to separate off the utility, and also what is called the glory of the business, and contemplate the circumstances that attend it, and the effects that follow it. Many of these indeed are never published, and some of them cannot easily be imagined. But without difficulty we may apprehend more than enough to verify our observation. When a victory is obtained on land, why—I use the language of Scripture—"the land mourns," "the earth languisheth:" fields are ravaged, fences are laid waste, houses are demolished; and a garden

of Eden is trampled into a wilderness. There is often also much slaughter among the brute creation, especially in the useful, the generous horse. And "God takes care for oxen," and tenderly mentions the loss of very much cattle in the destruction of Nineveh. But let us refer to our own species only.

Mournful is the infliction of pain—while thousands are agonizing and groaning together, and not a few long left with their wounds bleeding and undressed.

Mournful is the loss of limbs. How we feel when a neighbour by disease or accident is compelled to submit to a single amputation! How we are affected, even to this hour, with the case of Mephibosheth. Poor babe!—His nurse hearing the approach of battle, fled, and he dropped from her frighted arms, and became "lame in both his feet." But how many individuals by one action are maimed and return home leaving parts of themselves behind moving or carried about, mangled and dismembered; one without an eye, another without an arm, and so of the rest.

Mournful is the loss of lives. For where is the human being that is not of importance to some one?—On the late news, Edinburgh was illuminated; but not entirely: one street refused its lustre—in this lived the widowed wife of the gallant Captain Duff. It was a striking exception. Darkness best suited an anguished mind, whose hope was fled. But social attachments and usefulness do not depend upon rank and office. How many a poor widow in Spain, in France, in England, whose name will never be announced in the public papers, is now weeping over a husband she will see no more! How many a child is at this hour crying, "my father, my father."

Mournful above all is the loss of souls. We are far from supposing that all warfare is unlawful; and that a good man cannot be a soldier. Who has not read the life of Col. Gardiner slain by the rebels in the battle of Preston Pans. Was there ever a mind more purely and ardently pious? And blessed be God, we have a few centurions "devout men, and who fear God with all their house." A man may ascend to heaven from the field of battle.—But the moral state of armies and navies is too well known to be a secret. At any time the generality of those that compose them are ill prepared to die. How dreadfully affecting then is it to think of so many of our fellow-creatures being cut off in a moment, and sent, with all their sins upon them, to appear before the Judge of all!—So many ways is victory turned into mourning.

But let us finally observe whether there be nothing to render our remark significantly true on the present occasion. Let none imagine that we are going to depreciate the value of the victory with which Providence has crowned his majesty's arms, and which we are assembled to acknowledge. Never was there a victory more seasonable. Never was there a victory more complete. Never was there a victory more wonderful, when we consider the number of ships compelled to strike to such an inferior force; the annihilation of so large a portion of the naval power of the enemy at a blow; the preservation of our own vessels through the tremendous gales that rendered it necessary to destroy so many of the prizes. As a victory was never more bravely won, so never was there a victory more modestly, more piously announced. In perusing the dispatch, we seem to be reading the language of a divine, and the gazette charms us as well as the result of the battle. O my country! were this the disposition of all thy sons; were all thy rulers, thy magistrates, thy officers, thus boldly and openly to acknowledge God in all their ways, and to walk before others in the profession of truth, and the practice of devotion—we need "not fear: what can man do unto us?" Never was there a victory more important. Events have indeed since taken place which have not only distressed, but alarmed many. The strides of the enemy in Germany have been rapid and discouraging. But not to observe that his situation every day seems to become more critical, and that in that corner too at "eventide it may be light," we should remember that all the continental successes of the enemy add to the importance of our victory; for if we are to be deprived of other resources of assistance, and compelled under God to depend alone upon ourselves, every reduction of their means of annoyance and invasion, becomes, in the same proportion, more valuable.

But still we acknowledge that the more difficult the period is, the more need have we of extraordinary wisdom, decision, and courage. Frequently much, yea every thing depends on one man into whom nature has infused those elements of greatness which events combine, draw forth, and complete. And such a man was our departed hero. It cannot be denied—that a man who was a host in himself; a man whose very name struck terror into the foe; a man whose success inspired the most absolute confidence in those he commanded, and whose orders would stimulate them to the most dangerous enterprises—no—it cannot be denied that, in the present circumstances of our country—that such a man can ill be spared: and therefore that though our success has been glorious, it has demanded a costly sacrifice.

It is remarkable, that the ship in which he fell was THE VICTORY, and thus the words we have chosen were circumstantially accomplished: "the victory was turned that day into mourning:" the cabin boy and the captain wept; the groan spread from the

ship through the whole fleet: villages and cities shared the grief; till the tears of the sovereign blended and mingled with those of the people.—Nelson, farewell! Thou hast more than repaid the confidence thy king and thy country reposed in thy patriotism and thy talents. Thy warfare is accomplished—but long shall thy fame live; long shall thy example stimulate. Thy memory shall be embalmed in our grateful affections; and history shall record, that a whole nation, sensible of their obligations to thee, by their presence or their sympathy attended thy funeral, and followed thy awful remains to their august and final abode.

——What then, you say; what is it that you wish from us on the present occasion?—Are we not called together to rejoice, and do you expect us to mourn? Not absolutely.—I would wish even to inspire you with joy. There is nothing more hateful than a certain disposition that curdles every thing it touches. There are some fretful beings that sour every enjoyment by discontent. Mention any thing joyous—and their evil genius looks only after exceptions; speak of any thing commendable—and their sagacity is exerted to make deductions. They never fix upon pleasing and cheerful circumstances, but turn round the dark side of every object, till they are surrounded only with gloomy aspects, and become a burden to themselves and a kind of terror to their connexions.

Be not ye like unto them. Be not insensible to the numberless blessings we enjoy, or regardless of the several hopeful indications that brighten our condition. Rejoice, therefore, but let your joy be tempered.

First, with seriousness. Indeed the times require it. God has absolutely a controversy with us. Our difficulties are great and increasing. We are engaged with a foe formidable by his means and malice. Our sins testify against us. And to this hour, neither the displays of his wrath nor his mercy have made any due impression upon the public mind. "Shall I not visit for these things, saith the Lord? Shall not my soul be avenged on such a nation as this?" Is it not as true of nations as of individuals? "He that being often reproved hardeneth his neck shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy." Where now are the empires of antiquity? Where now are the famous churches of Asia? Where are his once peculiar people, the Jews?—"And if he spared not the natural branches, take heed, lest he spare not thee."

Secondly, with prayer. Every thing depends upon the Lord of Hosts. It is as easy for him to help with few, as with many; we should therefore never despair. On the other hand, without him "vain is the help of man." Vain are the best appointed and commanded armies and navies. He can take wisdom from the wise, and courage from the brave. Sickness is his, and dissention. "He holds the winds in his fist;" let him open his hand, and the storm roars, and our defence sinks like lead in the mighty waters. And prayer has power with God, especially the prayer of those that love and fear him. The Bible is a history of its exploits. But nothing is more suitable or encouraging than the fate of Sennacherib. He had overrun many countries; and going from conquering to conquer, ascribed all his surprising success to the wisdom of his own understanding, and the vigour of his own arm. He poured into Judea. Every thing seemed to give way before him—and he deemed himself perfectly sure of taking Jerusalem. But Hezekiah discomfited him—not by fighting—but praying. He went up into the temple, and spread the letter before the Lord, and his vast army dispersed and disappeared, like chaff before the wind. "Trust in him at all times, ye people pour out your hearts before him; God is a refuge for us."

Thirdly, with praise; that praise that will pass by instrumentality, and confess the hand of God; that praise that will ascribe nothing to our worthiness, but all his undeserved goodness. Had he dealt with us after our sins, or rewarded us according to our iniquities, instead of saying "the Lord hath done great things for us, whereof we are glad," we should now be sitting in sackcloth and ashes. "Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto thy name give glory, for thy mercy, and for thy truth's sake."

And surely, my dear hearers, we cannot suppose that we have done justice to the design of the day, by indulging a warm, momentary impression or exclamation. This is only to imitate the Jews, of whom it is complained, "he saved them from the hand of them that hated them, and redeemed them from the hand of the enemy. And the waters covered their enemies: there was not one of them left. Then believed they his words; they sang his praise. They soon forgat his works, they waited not for his counsel." Let us "keep these things for ever in the imaginations of our thoughts, and prepare our hearts to seek God." Let us daily ask, "what shall I render to the Lord for all his benefits towards me?" And let us consecrate to him our time, our talents, and our property.

For in the last place we require you to blend with your joy, beneficence. "Let all your works," says the apostle, "be done with charity."—What said Isaiah of a fast! "Is not this the fast that I have chosen? to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke? Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the poor that are cast out to thy house? when

thou seest the naked, that thou cover him; and that thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh?" And what said Nehemiah to the people upon a festival? "This day is holy unto the Lord your God, mourn not nor weep. Go your way, eat the fat, and drink the sweet, AND SEND PORTIONS UNTO THEM FOR WHOM NOTHING IS PREPARED."

Men and brethren. It is scarcely necessary for me to mention the particular purpose, for which your liberality is to be exercised this morning. You well know that a collection is voluntarily to be made this day, through the whole kingdom, for the relief of the families of those who suffered in the late action.——While all our fellow-citizens are coming forward, I am sure this congregation will readily co-operate with them. The claim made upon you, is a claim of humanity, of gratitude, of justice. It addresses you as Christians, as Britons, as men. Suppose all these victims of bereavement were now assembled before you, dressed in mourning, and wiping their weeping eyes.—Could you be insensible?

Ah, ye brave countrymen, who fought to defend us, and who generously perished that we may continue in the possession of all our comforts—ye, descending wounded and gory into your watery graves—ye—ye said "we lament not our own destiny; we have fallen at our post—But to you we commend our mothers, our wives, our children, our babes. Deprived for ever of our support, let them find succour in you." Valiant sailors! there is not a British heart but awakes and melts at your call. Ye have indeed done your duty; and we hasten to perform ours.

"Pure and undefiled religion before God and the Father is this, to visit the fatherless and the widows in their affliction, and to keep ourselves unspotted from the world!"

AN

ESSAY ON MARRIAGE,

OR,

THE DUTY OF CHRISTIANS TO MARRY RELIGIOUSLY:

WITH A FEW REFLECTIONS ON IMPRUDENT MARRIAGES.

BY WILLIAM JAY.

THE SECOND EDITION.

ADVERTISEMENT.

We, the ministers of the Wiltshire Association, assembled together at Melksham this day, October 22, 1806,—deploring the little regard of late years paid by too many professors of religion, to the Christian rule of marriage: and deeming it desirable that the attention of the public in general, and our own churches in particular, should be called to this subject, do unanimously request the Rev. Wm. Jay to publish some strictures upon it; and the more so, as he has already set forth a Sermon on the Duties of Husbands and Wives, which has met with great acceptance.

Signed,
On behalf of the Association,
George Mantel, Chairman.

ESSAY, &c.

SECTION I.

The peculiarity and importance of the Marriage relation. The possibility of knowing the will of God in this affair. The law laid down.

How wonderful is it, that two persons, who perhaps never met before, should, by a train of circumstances be brought together, obtain a peculiar propriety in each other, and form one absolute communion of wishes, joys, and sorrows.

If we compare this relation with other connexions, we shall find that it surpasses them all.—Are other unions *optional?* They may be limited in their continuance, or terminated at pleasure. But this is permanent, and indissoluble. You cannot marry for a given period. It is for life.—Are other unions *natural?* Intimate indeed is the relation between brother and sister: tender is the relation between parents and children, especially between the mother and the son of her womb. But for this shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. What God hath joined together, let no man put asunder.

The marriage connexion therefore, is the most singular, and the most important. Hence, it can never be viewed with indifference. It cannot be carelessly contemplated by legislators, by politicians, by moralists, by divines—And can it be slightingly regarded by the individuals themselves? The effects extend to families and communities—but how much more powerfully must the consequences affect the parties immediately concerned?—can the Scripture, always alive to the welfare of man—Can the Scripture pass by such a relation? Impossible! It shows us its divine institution

and benediction in Paradise. It shows us our Saviour gracing with his presence the celebration of a marriage at Cana in Galilee, and displaying his glory by working a miracle to preserve the new-married couple from embarrassment and mortification. It shows us in this condition, characters the most eminent and distinguished for piety and usefulness; witness Enoch, and Peter, and James, and John. It brands with infamy the doctrine that forbids to marry. It often employs the connexion as the image of the union subsisting between Christ and the church. It assures us that marraige is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge.

It is obvious therefore that the Scripture is far from discouraging marriage. But what it does not condemn, it is careful to regulate. Let us then, my Christian friends, look after the will of God in this momentous and interesting subject.

If ever we err, it is not from any defect in the Scripture, but because there is some occasion of stumbling in us: some inattention that hinders examination, or some prejudice that perverts it. His word is a lamp unto our feet, and a light unto our paths. There is a sufficiency in it for all the useful purposes of life and godliness. Can a man ask at these lively oracles how he is to conduct himself in prosperity or adversity; can he inquire how he is to govern his family, and train up his children and be at a loss for an answer? He may run that readeth. So it is in the case before us. If Christians are really desirous of knowing with whom in marriage alliance they are to unite themselves, we make no scruple to say, the revealed will of God is decisive and clear: *It restricts their choice to religious character only.*

SECTION II.

This Law argued and established.

If nothing express had been said on this subject, the conclusion might fairly have been drawn from these general commands, which forbid all chosen and needless association with the irreligious founded on the danger of contamination.

The case may be confirmed in no inconsiderable degree from the state of the Jews. It is scarcely necessary to mention, that the Jews were forbidden to marry with the surrounding nations. But it may be proper to state two objections.

First. It may be said that the prohibition was confined to the seven accursed nations of Canaan. But this was not the case. Ammonites, Moabites, and Egyptians are reckoned by Ezra, among these from whom the returned Israelites were to be separated; and none of these belonged to the race thus devoted to extermination.

Secondly. It may be supposed that this law was political, and regarded this people only in their civil and national capacity. But the futility of this will be demonstrated by remarking, First, that they were allowed to marry with individuals of any of the neighbouring countries, when they became proselytes. This shows that the interdiction regarded not their nation but their religion. And secondly, that the reason always assigned as the ground of the prohibition is not political but moral—and therefore universally and constantly binding. Thus we find Moses saying "neither shalt thou make marriages with them; thy daughter thou shalt not give unto his son, nor his daughter shalt thou take unto thy son. For they will turn away thy son from following me, that they may serve other gods; so will the anger of the Lord be kindled against you, and destroy thee suddenly."

But to come nearer. Have we not in the New Testament a prohibition the most explicit? Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers. We are aware that some are disposed to take this Scripture in a larger sense, as forbidding to join with such persons in church communion. But in answer to this—not to remark, what we think cannot be denied, that the expression of yoke-fellow is more used in reference to marriage than to church communion: the former application of it being the natural and original, the latter of course only the borrowed and secondary; I say not to avail ourselves of this circumstance, we observe, that we have nothing to fear from admitting the explanation proposed. For if Christians are forbidden to join with unbelievers in church communion, surely they are equally enjoined not to enter with them into marriage contract. What! were the converted Corinthians commanded to come out from among them: and yet be permitted to enter into the closest affinity with them? Were they ordered to be separate, and not to touch the unclean thing: and yet be allowed to become one body? Was there to be no fellowship between righteousness and unrighteousness, between light and darkness: and yet were these to be united for ever? Was he that believeth to have no part with an infidel, and yet suffer them to be partners for life? Was the temple of God to have nothing to do with idols, and yet were idols to be set up within its walls?

But if this be not deemed sufficient to establish our doctrine, let us attend to the language of the Apostle, when speaking expressly of marriage. "The wife," says he "is bound by the law as long as her husband liveth; but if her husband be dead, she is at liberty to be married to whom she will; only in the Lord." Now though this be stated

as the occasion of the words required, in reference to a widow, the limitation unquestionably extends to all Christians in the same relative circumstances. This then is the law of the house. This is the indispensable consideration.—*Only in the Lord.*—Thus the will of God is fully made known, and there are two things we ought to remark with regard to it.

First. He cannot err in his decision. His judgment is always according to truth. His understanding is infinite. He views a subject in all its bearings, in all its consequences, in all the possibilities of its operation. He sees effects in their causes. He knows the end from the beginning. He perceives how we should think, feel, and act in every untried state of being. How qualified therefore is he to undertake to direct us? And to what implicit respect and absolute compliance is the determination of such an adviser entitled?

But secondly, we should remember that his council is not advice but command. Considered indeed as speaking from a regard to our welfare, a love to our souls—he is the friendly monitor, but as to our obligation to obey, and the danger we incur by transgression—there he is nothing less than a Sovereign. It is at your peril to cast any of his words behind your back. See that ye refuse not him that speaketh.

SECTION III.

The evils of transgressing it variously viewed.

If people were as easily satisfied in receiving truth as they are in opposing it; if no more was needful to influence practice than to produce conviction, it might be unnecessary to enlarge after the adduction of the preceding arguments. But alas! in spiritual concerns, men venture their souls on such trifling evidence, as, were it to govern them in their temporal affairs, would lead their fellow-creatures to conclude that they were either madmen or idiots. Here we need line upon line, precept upon precept. Let us then specify some of the disadvantages and injuries that arise from an infraction of this law among professors of religion. And here we may observe,

—That it scandalizes others. It counteracts, discourages, and confounds ministers. It injures the minds of your fellow-Christians. It proves a distress to the strong and a stumbling-block to the weak. It turns that which is lame out of the way. To your pious relations it occasions the most painful regret and anxiety. "And Esau was forty years old when he took to wife Judith the daughter of Beeri the Hittite, and Bashemath the daughter of Elon the Hittite: which were a grief of mind unto Isaac and to Rebekah." "And Rebekah said to Isaac, I am weary of my life, because of the daughters of Heth: if Jacob take a wife of the daughters of Heth, such as these which are of the daughters of the land, what good shall my life do me?"

—It excites suspicion of your own religion. At least it shows that you are not alive to its principles and privileges: that if you ask its advice you can follow your own opinion; and that if you profess to please it, you are not afraid to offend it. Would you marry an enemy of your own, before you believed there was a change of disposition wrought in him? And why? Because you love yourselves—this would prevent it. And if the love of God prevailed in your hearts, would you marry an enemy to God before you discerned in him an evidence of conversion. Do not I hate them, O Lord, that hate thee, and am not I grieved with those that rise up against thee? I hate them with perfect hatred. I count them mine enemies. What do ye more than others? Should not the line of distinction between the church and the world be not only real but visible? Should not the Christian universally appear? Are not his choice and refusal, as well as his sorrow and joy, to evince the empire of religion? Whatsoever ye do, in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus. Whether therefore ye eat or drink, or whatever ye do, do all to the glory of God. These are the injunctions of God. And we are to esteem all his commandments concerning all things to be right, and to hate every false way.

Again. We call upon you to remember the duties enjoined upon Christians with regard to their households. The discharge of these duties in married life requires union, countenance, assistance. They cannot be performed to advantage, if at all, where in the heads of the family, there is a contrariety of convictions, dispositions, and pursuits. Peter therefore enforces his admonition upon husbands and wives by this motive, that your prayers be not hindered. For, imagine the case we are condemning. Does the man seek the glory of God in all he does, and the woman her own glory. Does the woman make the will of God her rule, and the man his own will? Instead of striving together, they draw adversely, and the design of the union is defeated. Are there children? Some will be likely to adhere to the father, some to the mother. Are there servants? Some will be likely to attach themselves to the master, some to the mistress. Thus the household and wife will probably keep a perpetual watch over each other, unwilling to lose any of their respective influence; and the house will be divided against itself.

We observe also, that we personally need every assistance we can receive in our passage to heaven. There is surely enough in ourselves, and in the way we travel, to keep

us back, without engaging any one constantly to retard our progress, either by opposition or diversion! What need often have we of counsel in spiritual darkness and doubts? of comfort in soul-trouble! of stimulation, by reproof or example, in our religious languors? "Two are better than one; because they have a good reward for their labour. For if they fall, the one will lift up his fellow: but wo to him that is alone when he falleth; for he hath not another to help him up." He is a friend indeed who knows the road, will journey with us, and afford us seasonable succour: but what assistance is to be derived from one who has no eyes, or hands, or who is going in a contrary direction? Is it enough when we want daily and hourly support that a companion will not try to interrupt us?

For here—and this is another consideration—here not to help is to hinder. The very attraction of the mind from high and holy things, by continual discourse about other subjects, will be no inconsiderable detriment. For it is by the frequent recurrence of divine things in our thoughts and in our conversation, that we become spiritually-minded, and continue so. Pious emotions may be starved, where they are not assassinated. Fire will be extinguished immediately by water; but it will go out in time, even for want of fuel.

But we do not go too far when we say, that an irreligious connexion is likely to prove the most effectual instrument in the world to injure us, not only by weakening impressions, chilling our affections, and drawing us off by degrees from various duties, but also by perverting the judgment, and enticing to sin. They were mingled with the heathen, and learned their works; and they served their idols which became a snare unto them. Evil communications corrupt good manners. And here several additional things should be seriously considered. For instance,

—The example is near—is always in sight.

—Evil has more power over us than good. An oath when heard will make a deeper impression than a prayer. Profane images are more easily retained in the mind than pure ones. Evil falls in with our depravity; and always finds in us a friend to welcome and to strengthen it.

—The danger is greater if the unconverted party be the husband, as he has the advantage of superior authority and influence.

—The more attachment there is, the greater the hazard of moral injury: for affection is wonderfully assimilating. Like fire, it reduces every thing it seizes into its own nature. We are always in a great measure the same with the object of our regard. The image by its frequent entrance into the mind, and by its residence there, leaves its impression and resemblance.

But if you should escape unhurt morally—which would be little less than a miracle—still you may experience bitter trials: and under these crosses you will not be able to look up to God for support and deliverance, with the same cheerfulness and confidence you would feel, if they were afflictions of *his* sending.—But you have chosen them.—Hence painful reflections of mind. Hence you may expect to hear as the inquiry of conscience, and as the censure of Providence.—Hast thou not procured this unto thyself.—Thou hast done foolishly, from henceforth thou shalt have wars. Yea, something of this kind *must* be expected.—"If my children forsake my law, and walk not in my judgments; if they break my statutes, and keep not my commandments; then will I visit their transgression with the rod, and their iniquity with stripes." He has said, if ye walk contrary to me, I also will walk contrary to you. And he is a faithful God. And he is able to make good his word. He can take satisfaction out of our chosen delights. He can remove them in his anger. He can leave them to produce leanness in our souls. Though he forgives the iniquities of his people, he taketh vengeance on their inventions.

To which we may add—and these are natural and unavoidable consequences—the painful anxiousness of living with those from whom you fear that you shall be separated for ever; and the peculiar disagreeableness of being connected with those who are incapable of the principal part of your affection. Love them you may, indeed, as husband or wife; but not as believers; not as followers of our Lord, to whom you are allied by stronger ties than human, and which can never be dissolved. Must not this be a vast deduction of happiness, a bitter ingredient in the cup; a kind of daily death?

SECTION IV.

The mischief historically considered.

We may take another view of the breach of this law, and see the evils that resulted from it, as natural effects, or as judgments from God, as they are held forth in the Scriptures of truth.

This was the particular sin for which God drowned the old world.

Some of Lot's daughters married in Sodom, and perished in the overthrow. Both Ishmael and Esau married irreligiously, and both were rejected and turned persecutors.

The first blasphemer that was stoned by God's command, is marked as an offspring of one of these marriages—his mother had espoused an Egyptian.

The first captivity of the Jews, after their settlement in the Holy Land, is ascribed to this cause. The whole passage is very instructive. It is said that the remains of the nations "were to prove Israel to know whe-

ther they would hearken unto the commandment of the Lord, which he commanded their fathers by the hand of Moses." "And the children of Israel dwelt among the Canaanites, Hittites, and Amorites, and Perizzites, and Hivites, and Jebusites: and they took their daughters to be their wives, and gave their daughters to their sons, and served their gods. And the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord, and forgat the Lord their God, and served Baalim, and the groves. Therefore the anger of the Lord was hot against Israel, and he sold them into the hand of Chushan-rishathaim king of Mesopotamia: and the children of Israel served Chushan-rishathaim eight years."

David married the daughter of Talmai, king of Geshur, by whom he had Absalom—the disgrace and curse of his family.

The case of Solomon is a warning to all ages. His son Rehoboam, that lost the ten tribes, sprang from one of these forbidden marriages—his mother was an Ammonitess.

The marriage of Ahab is thus awfully noticed—"And it came to pass, as if it had been a light thing for him to walk in the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, that he took to wife Jezebel the daughter of Ethbaal king of the Zidonians, and went and served Baal, and worshipped him." "But there was none like unto Ahab, which did sell himself to work wickedness in the sight of the Lord, whom Jezebel his wife stirred up."

What was it that Ezra so grievously lamented and so sharply reproved? It was that "the holy seed had mingled themselves with the people of the land."

And what says the zealous reformer, Nehemiah? "Their children spake half in the speech of Ashdod, and could not speak in the Jews' language, but according to the language of each people. And I contended with them, and cursed them, and smote certain of them, and plucked off their hair, and made them swear by God, saying, Ye shall not give your daughters unto their sons, nor take their daughters unto your sons, or for yourselves. Did not Solomon king of Israel sin by these things? yet among many nations was there no king like him, who was beloved of his God, and God made him king over all Israel: nevertheless even him did outlandish women cause to sin. Shall we then hearken unto you to do all this great evil, to transgress against our God in marrying strange wives?" "Now these things were our examples to the intent we should not lust after all things as they also lusted."

SECTION V.

Excuses to justify deviation from it examined.

In the history of the church, recorded in the New Testament, we find no instances similar to those which have been remarked in the preceding chapter. The rule was too clearly understood, and the reasons on which it was founded were too powerfully felt to allow of its violation by the primitive Christians: and indeed one would suppose that a godly character would stand in need of no positive prohibition in such a case as this. It must be expected that his very feelings would secure him. For surely a kind of violence must be offered to his dispositions and principles before such a step can be taken: accordingly something of this nature is often pleaded. They feel religious reluctance, but speak as if it were to be and must be. Let us examine this, and see whether it be their fate or their folly.

Sometimes they plead peculiar circumstances, which seem to countenance it. As this is a very common excuse, and by which many are deluded, it demands some notice. And for ever to check all encouragement derived from this quarter, let the following things be maturely considered:

That such prognostics are rarely, if ever, remarked, but when they fall in with our determination, or at least with our propensity—That when a man receives not the love of the truth, God may give him up to strong delusion to believe a lie—That "thus saith the Lord God; Every man of the house of Israel that setteth up his idols in his heart, and putteth the stumbling-block of his iniquity before his face, and cometh to the prophet; I the Lord will answer him that cometh according to the multitude of his idols; that I may take the house of Israel in their own heart, because they are all estranged from me through their idols." That after he has expressly said to Balaam, *go not*, and he finds him still longing for the enterprise, he can say, by an irony, which the eager mind will mistake for reality, go.—That Jonah was deceived, if he supposed that when fleeing from the presence of the Lord, it was very providential for him to find a vessel just ready to sail for Tarshish—That circumstances and events are equivocal, having occurred at different times with the most contradictory aspects—That the word of God is our only guide, and that only while walking by this rule shall mercy and peace be upon us—That we are to lay stress on nothing, however singular or striking that opposes the revealed will of God—That the death of the prophet, slain by a lion, was written to teach us this very truth: he had received an express command, in which he could not be mistaken; and he yielded to another specious suggestion, as coming from God, concerning which he could not be sure.

But there is another justification often urged. It is the prospect of being useful. This also is common, and has often ensnared

those who ought to walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise. Here permit me to ask you the following questions:

Are we to do evil, that good may come? It is desirable for a generous Christian to have property; he will do good with it: but is he to steal or rob in order to obtain it?

Is marriage to be considered as one of the means of grace? Is it ever spoken of in the Scripture, as intended for the conversion of souls? Is it any where prescribed for this purpose?

Promises and appearances may induce a pleasing hope during the formation of the connexion; but may not these be very fallacious? To admit this, it is not necessary to suppose that the individual is vile enough to deceive wilfully: yet this has frequently been the case, and a regard to the forms of evangelical religion has been a mere pretence, gradually thrown off as the inducement for using it ceased. But it is not necessary to charge a man with hypocrisy. There are many powerful emotions that are very sincere, and yet not durable. The mind may be softened by affection, and view every thing in reference to its favourite purpose. Men know not themselves; they are not aware how they may feel in new and untried situations. The godliness which they seem even to admire in the general indistinct notion, and while at a distance, may become very irksome, when brought near and acted upon in every instance of life. Yea, it must be offensive at least in all its more spiritual parts and exercises to every natural man. Who that is not alive to his religious improvement is likely to love an example that continually admonishes and condemns. Who that is trying to go to sleep loves a noise? Who that wishes to remain in darkness can be fond of light, especially placed so near?

Is it not more consistent with a becoming diffidence of yourselves, to fear that you should be injured by the irreligious, rather than that the irreligious should be benefited by you? We have already shown the danger of this in fact, and which has led an ingenuous author to remark, that he would pull another out of a pit, had need stand firm, or he may be pulled in. We have already mentioned Solomon. Whether Solomon hoped to bring over Pharoah's daughter to worship the true God, we know not; but we do know that she brought him over to worship a false one. But we have now to do only with the apprehension and impression of this truth. Is it consistent with humility, to suppose that you can stand where others, and some of them far superior to yourselves, have fallen? Is it consistent with a proper sense of your own weakness, to rush into extreme perils, confident not only that you shall be secure there, but even do good? The very imagination forebodes ill. It looks like the pride that goes before destruction, and the haughty spirit that precedes a fall. Indeed it is righteous in God to suffer us to fall, when disobeying his command, we renounce his protection and venture to proceed without him.

Again. As you conclude that your companion being ungodly, will not be able to make you irreligious, what authorizes you to think that your being godly will be able to make him religious? Surely, out of your own mouth you are condemned; for the very principle upon which you proceed with regard to yourself, should reduce the confidence you indulge with regard to him. If you have no fear that he can impress and influence you, you should have no hope that you can impress and influence him. If you believe that your love to him will not alter you, you ought not to believe that his love to you will alter him.

And do you consider what human nature is? Do you consider what real religion is? If so, surely you would not think so lightly of accomplishing the conversion of a soul as you now seem to do. If the process be so easy, why are so few converted at all? Why do not all those who have dear connexions convert those whom they love and by whom they are beloved?

But you say, you do not expect the result, independent of God's influence and blessing. But is not he able to convert them? He is. And we have reason to believe he has in some cases employed his power. For we cannot go the length of Dr. Doddridge, who has remarked, that where Christians have knowingly espoused irreligious characters, he never knew an instance of the conversion of one of them afterwards. But, I ask, would you take up an affair so important, on a ground so slender? On a mere possibility? For probability there is none. You would not like to marry a condemned criminal because he *may* be pardoned or reprieved. God can make a beggar a gentleman, and yet I presume you would not like to take him on this presumption; you would rather reckon certainly upon a little wealth. Why, then, marry an unconverted sinner, because God may, because God can, call him by his grace?

Besides: if the acceptance and success of all our endeavours depend wholly upon his favour, can it be a rational way to attain our wishes to slight his authority, and to provoke his anger by disobedience?

But to conclude. Even if God should overrule such a connexion for good, you will remember that this is *his* work, and the glory belongs to him. It does not prove that you have done right; nor can it free the mind from distress in review. For you cannot be so ignorant as not to be able to distinguish between your unrighteousness, and the divine goodness that has thus blessed you, notwithstanding all your desert.

SECTION VI.

In what cases this law is not broken; though both the parties be not religious.

We have thus endeavoured, by placing the subject in various points of light, to prove that Christians, in the business of marriage, ought to confine their choice to pious characters only. But to relieve the minds of some who deserve pity rather than censure, let me remark two or three instances in which the rule laid down is not transgressed.

First. It sometimes happens that both parties are ignorant of divine things at the time of marriage, and one is called afterward. When this is the case, the blame does not attach. But the individual renewed by divine grace, now feels pains and anxieties to which he was before a stranger. It is the nature of grace to excite with a concern for our own welfare a concern for the salvation of others, especially of those to whom we are tenderly connected by blood, friendship, or affinity. How can I endure the thought of being severed for ever from her in whom my happiness is so much bound up? How can I bear, will such an Esther say, to see the destruction of my kindred?—She will therefore pray, and use every persuasive method to allure. She will endeavour to render her religion lovely and attractive. It is what the Scripture enjoins—"Ye wives be in subjection to your own husbands; that, if any obey not the word, they also may without the word be won by the conversation of the wives; while they behold your chaste conversation coupled with fear." And for the consolation of such, be it remembered, that after a trial, and perhaps a long one, of their faith and patience, God has frequently heard their petitions and succeeded their endeavours. And after performing religious exercises alone, they have gone to the house of God in company; and have walked together as heirs of the grace of life.

Secondly. Persons may be mistaken after due examination. Every thing admits of counterfeit. There is a species imitation of every Christian grace as well as of every moral virtue. But we are not accountable for our inability to read the heart. This is the prerogative of God only. By their fruits we are to know them. If the profession be fair, and the life blameless, there is no objection upon this ground to hinder choice.

Thirdly. There is another case which perhaps to some will not carry the same force of conviction. Yet we do not express ourselves without due deliberation and counsel—It is this. Two individuals, both at the time of promise destitute of religion, may solemnly pledge themselves to each other, and before the actual accomplishment of the covenant engagement one of them may become pious—We will suppose it to be the man—In this case we affirm, that he would not be at liberty to violate his promise under the pretence of looking out for a character congenial with his present views. If some contend that marriage be nothing more than a civil contract, all must allow that it is nothing less: and not to observe the coercion of the case—not to observe that the law could enforce the claim—the insufficiency of justifying a civil offence by a religious reason—and the ridiculousness of the attempt—what a dishonour would be done to the cause of the gospel by such prevaricating morality? For such it must appear to the world. Whereas we are to have our conversation honest among the Gentiles; we are not to suffer our good to be evil spoken of; we are to avoid the very appearance of evil—such is the holy delicacy of the gospel!

This seems to be one of those cases in which a good man sweareth to his own hurt and changeth not. And trying as the scene may be, if by the consent of the other party he be not honourably disengaged, we should advise him to a plain strait-forward policy; and to expect that, in a combination of circumstances so peculiarly providential, all will be overruled for good, either by way of usefulness or trial.

And if even this solemn consideration be not sufficient to discharge a man honourably from one to whom he has contracted himself—Will any thing else? Can any thing else? What! is he to trifle with a sacred engagement, and to wound the affections, the respectability, the health, the peace of a female! because another object comes in view subsequently in his opinion more eligible for person, for fortune, for address? If a man wished to sink the honour of religion, and to disgrace the value of the Christian; how much more should it ever be the ministerial character! he could not take a step that would more effectually accomplish his purpose.

SECTION VII.

The disregard of this principle lamented. But piety, though essential to choice, not sufficient alone to justify it. Ministers under peculiar obligation to marry discreetly. Prudence needful, and recommended.

Happy those who have formed a union founded in true godliness, the bonds of which are faith and love in Christ Jesus. They are pleasant in life, and in death not divided. But how deplorable is it that this Christian rule of marriage is so frequently trampled upon. The violation is in the degree of it at least peculiar to our own age. Our pious ancestors, especially among the non-conformists, would have been shocked at the practice, as appears from their invaluable writings. And I am persuaded it is very much owing

to the prevalence of these indiscriminate and unhallowed connexions that we have fallen so far short of those men of God who are gone before us, in our seclusion from the world, in the simplicity of our manners, in the uniformity of our profession, in the discharge of family worship, and the training up of our households in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. How could it have been otherwise? Is there not a connexion between causes and effects? Do we sow one kind of grain and reap another? Can men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?

Guard, therefore, my Christian friends, against every pretence that would draw you into this forbidden path! Establish the unlawfulness and perniciousness of such alliances as a principle in your minds, that when the evil day of temptation comes, it may find you ready to resist steadfast in the faith. You should not have your weapons to seek when you want them to use. O woman, do not accept a man who has all the wisdom of the world, if a stranger to the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus our Lord. Do not, it is the rough image of an old divine, do not choose a swine because he has a golden trough. Whatever a man possesses, remember he has *nothing*, if he has not the one thing needful. O man, be not reconciled to a weak or ugly mind because it wears a handsome body. "Favour is deceitful, and beauty is vain: but a woman that feareth the Lord, she shall be praised. Give her of the fruit of her hands; and let her own works praise her in the gates."

But a marriage that is not sinful may be improper. The apostle himself distinguishes between what is *lawful* and what is *expedient*. Religion is indeed indispensable, but does not alone constitute the propriety of the action. Religion is indeed essential, but is not abstracted from all other considerations sufficient to justify choice. To exemplify this a little.

—The admission of the piety of the parties does not destroy the indecorum of haste in marrying immediately after the death of a husband or wife.

The admission of the piety of the parties does not hinder the censure due to a great disparity in years. How unnatural, how indecent is it to see an old man surrounded with infants and babes which he can scarcely see or hear for the infirmities of age! How unnatural, how odious is it to see a young man fastened to a piece of antiquity—so as to perplex strangers to determine whether he is living with a wife or a mother!

The admission of the piety of the parties does not render in all cases a difference of sentiment and of denomination unimportant. It is not lovely for the husband and wife to repair on the Sabbath-day morning to separate places of worship. It is not pleasant in remarking what they have heard after their return home, for the one to censure what the other approves. It is not edifying in the dedication of the common offspring to God by baptism to disagree, not only as to the importance, but also as to the validity of the ordinance. The observation cannot be considered as founded in bigotry, since it will equally apply to both sides of the question in a number of cases in every religious community, and is derived from the unalterable nature of things. Indeed, to have a preference from conviction, and to adhere to the distinctions arising from it, without condemning others, can never be conformed with illiberally, but by a weak or a vicious mind.

The admission of the piety of the parties cannot preclude the necessity of suitableness. Indeed religion being supposed, suitableness seems to be the chief requisite to the duty, the respectability, and the happiness of connected life. This fitness takes in an adaptation to each other personally, and also to the situation in which they are called to move. It has commonly been said that no class of men err so much in this article as ministers. But surely this cannot be admitted. It cannot be supposed that those who have opportunities to make the best choice, commonly make the worst. It cannot be supposed that those whose office it is to inculcate prudence should be themselves proverbial for indiscretion. It cannot be supposed that those whose incomes are limited, and whose circumstances demand economy, would bring into the management of them those who have been trained up in delicacy and extravagance, and are helpless and profuse. It cannot be supposed that men whose office is respectable and productive of social intercourse would select vulgarity and ignorance, unfit to be either seen or heard, merely because it is pious.—A minister is to inculcate order and regularity, and would he marry a female that would render his house a scene of confusion and tumult? A minister is to show how the claims of life and religion harmonize, and to assign to the duties of each their own place and season—and would he marry a rattlebrain who, instead of being a keeper at home, has been always rambling after some new preacher; who instead of quietly glorifying God in her proper sphere of action, has been endeavouring to excite public attention: who has been zealous in matters of doubtful disputation, but has treated as beneath her regard common and relative obligations!—Need he be told that a becoming behaviour in a lower and private station is the surest pledge of, and the best preparation for a proper behaviour in a higher and more public situation!—A minister is to recommend neatness and all the decencies of life—and would he marry a slattern? A minister is to show that the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit

is in the sight of God of great price—and would he marry a scold? A minister is to stand in the same relation to all his people who demand his love and service—and would he marry a female who would fondly attach herself to a few cronies, listen to all their secrets and divulge her own, and form cabals and schisms which will render his residence unpleasant, or occasion his removal?

"The attention of ministers," says Mr. Gilpin, "in choosing such companions as may not hinder their success, is of so great importance; that in some countries the conduct of a pastor's wife, as well as that of the pastor himself, is supposed to edify or mislead the flock. Nay the minister himself is frequently condemned for the faults of his wife: thus in the protestant churches of Hungary they degrade a pastor whose wife indulges herself in cards, dancing, or any other public amusement that bespeaks the gaiety of a lover of the world rather than the gravity of a Christian matron. This severity springs from the supposition that the woman, having promised obedience to her husband, can do nothing but what he either directs or approves. Hence they conclude that example having a greater influence than precept, the wife of a minister, if she be inclined to the world, will preach wordly compliance with more success, by her conduct, than her husband can preach worldly renunciation by the most solemn discourses." And certainly the scandal of many will always be the result of that deplorable inconsistency which is sometimes seen between the serious instruction of a godly minister, and the trifling behaviour of a woman with whom he is so intimately connected. If the wives of the deacons are to be grave, not slanderous, sober, faithful in all things, what less can be required of the wives of pastors! "A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behaviour, given to hospitality, apt to teach; not given to wine, no striker, not greedy of filthy lucre; but patient; not a brawler, not covetous; one that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity; for if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?"

Things said indeed concerning the wives of ministers should generally be received with caution. Owing to a line in life, the peculiarity of which is often very little known or considered, their actions and motives may be sometimes condemned, when perhaps instead of deserving censure they merit praise. By their union with persons of some distinction and influence, they are in a state to awaken envy and ill-natured remark. By their occupying a conspicuous station they are more liable to observation than many in more common life. This renders it needful for them to be peculiarly circumspect and exemplary. And it must be confessed, that such females are placed in a situation very difficult and trying. But at the same time, if this situation be filled up properly, they have an opportunity to render themselves truly respectable and useful. In a superior degree they may serve their generation according to the will of God. In such circumstances, examples of prudence, economy, order, neatness, temper, amiableness, domestication, will not fail to strike and impress the minds of numbers.

But there is another view, in which we ought to consider such an help-meet. It is the advantage which her husband derives from her, not only personally but officially, and by which she is rendered a blessing to others. Are *his* life and exertions and reputation of importance? And does *she*, by the excellency of her character, reflect honour upon his choice, and secure deference to his judgment? Does she, by her attentions to his personal appearance, the state of his family, and the decorum of his children, add to his respectability and acceptance? Does she, by seasonably aiding his remembrance, contribute to the punctuality of his engagements, his visits, and his correspondence? Does she, by allowing her husband to trust safely in her, discharge him from secular concerns, and keep him free to pursue his work with undivided attention? Does she, by soothing him under distress, and tranquillizing him under irritation, preserve his mind in a frame favourable to reflection and study? Does she, by taking care of his health and spirits, enlarge the number and lengthen the course of his labours? Such a female deserves the esteem and applause of a congregation, a neighbourhood, a country.

Of what avail are reflections like these, to such as have already taken unguarded steps. Are not the consequences irretrievable? They are—but yet they may be improveable. I know it is cold comfort, to tell a man involved in difficulty and distress, that all this might have been avoided, and to upbraid him with the warnings which he refused to take. But will it not be useful for him to ascertain the cause of his mistake, and to review the progress of his infatuation? May he not turn to some good account, the lessons of painful experience, and the corrections of maturer judgment? Ought he not to increase in self-knowledge, and self-diffidence? "Surely it is meet to be said unto God, I have borne chastisement, I will not offend any more: That which I see not teach thou me: if I have done iniquity, I will do no more." "Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting."

But there are others whose escape is possible, and for whose preservation we are con-

cerned. I hope that my younger brethren in the sacred office, and those who are under a course of preparation for it, will not be offended at my taking advantage of this address, to introduce these free remarks on ministerial marriage: and by concluding, in calling upon them to show how undeservedly their body has been reproached.—Let them beware, let them see how necessary it is, not only that piety, but prudence should guide them. Let them remember how much their comfort, their honour, their usefulness depend upon a wise as well as a religious choice. A wrong step here may involve them in embarrassments; make them go mourning down to the grave; strip them of their glory, and take the crown from their head.

A prudent man foreseeth the evil, and hideth himself, but the simple pass on, and are punished. Keep sound wisdom and discretion; so shall they be life unto thy soul, and grace to thy neck. Then shalt thou walk in thy way safely, and thy foot shall not stumble.

AN ADDRESS

DELIVERED AT THE INTERMENT OF THE

REV. WILLIAM HUMPHRYES,

OF HAMMERSMITH;

IN THE BURIAL GROUND OF BUNHILL-FIELDS, OCTOBER 6, 1808.

BY WILLIAM JAY.

Death is a familiar subject, rendered so by the frequency of the event; for in one way or another it is perpetually visiting our world, and removing our neighbours, friends, and relations from our view. It would be well if the familiarity of it did not destroy the solemnity of it, and hinder those serious reflections with which it should always be accompanied. There are indeed few who will not exclaim on such an occasion as this: "Ah! see to what we must all be brought"—"We must all die." But it is to little purpose to reflect upon death as an universal and an unavoidable event. We must consider the cause of it; the consequences resulting from it; and the nature of a scriptural preparation for it. We can never have a better opportunity for this, than when we are assembled around the mouth of the grave, and behold the emblems of mortality before us.

——The cause is sin: and if there were no other consideration to excite our abhorrence of it—this would surely be sufficient—it "brought death into the world and all our wo." It is the decision of the apostle: "By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned." And therefore death is not, as it is commonly phrased, a debt due to nature, but to the justice of God: and hence, though all creatures in this lower world die, we only call *man* mortal; and the reproach is just—because he alone *became* subject to dissolution, and *chose* to die; they are mortal by destiny, but he by guilt.

——The consequences of death are various; and they are affecting.—Death is a solemn event, as it is the termination of our worldly affairs. It disconcerts every scheme our busy minds had formed; it breaks off the purposes of our hearts; it bids the labourer leave his spade, and the author his pen; it orders the preacher to descend from his pulpit, and the king from his throne. However attached to scenes and businesses to which we have been long accustomed, it tells us to take a farewell of fields and vallies, house and garden; and excludes us for ever from all the concerns beneath the sun.—Death is a solemn event, as it breaks asunder all the tender and endearing ties formed between parent and child, husband and wife, benefactor and friend, pastor and people; and reduces us to a state in which new and strange affinities commence; and we "say to corruption, Thou art my father, and to the worm, Thou art my mother and my sister."—Death is a solemn event, as it degrades and destroys that fine piece of divine workmanship, the body. However fearfully and wonderfully made, it weakens our strength in the way, and consumes our body like a moth; the eye sparkles no more, the hand forgets her cunning, the tongue is silent, the blood congeals; our flesh becomes loathsome, and however valued or loved before, survivors are thankful for a grave to bury their dead out of their sight.

But death is a much more solemn event when considered in relation to another world. For, my dear hearers, you will observe, that death is not the extinction of being, but only the termination of one mode of it: it is a transition from a temporal to an eternal state, from a state of trial to a state of decision and retribution. For while "the dust returns to the dust as it was, the spirit returns to God who gave it," and the divine fiat runs, "He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still."

Death, therefore, is beyond all comparison,

the most momentous event that can ever befall us—for "*after* this is the *judgment:* a judgment so *impartial*, that every one shall receive according to the deeds done in the body whether they be good or whether they be evil:" a judgment so *dreadful*, that the impenitent shall "call to the rocks to fall on them, and the mountains to cover them:" and yet a judgment so *certain*, that God has not only revealed it in his own word, but attested it in the sinner's conscience—hence his backwardness to self-inspection; his dread of solitude, his regrets and fears after the commission of sin. Whatever he pretends, he is no stranger to those feelings through life; but he is much more subject to them when he comes to die: the former diversions cease, the delusions of imagination subside, and the eyes, as they close on external things, open interiorly and begin to penetrate the secrets of an invisible world. It is called "the king of terrors;" and what fear has such torment in it? It is called an "enemy," and if it be allowed to come against us with all the force sin gives it, instead of being overcome by us, it will be more than a conqueror over us.

But from among these desolations and triumphs of death—how numerous are they all around!—we hear a voice saying, "I am the resurrection and the life; he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this?" Yes, blessed Saviour of the world, we believe that thou hast "remembered us in our low estate," we believe that thou hast interposed on our behalf, and said, "Deliver them from going down into the pit, I have found a ransom;" we believe that "in thy love and pity thou hast redeemed us." "Thou hast once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, to bring us unto God!"

My brethren, *He* is said to *die:* we as his followers are only said to *sleep*. Death stung him; but, as it is fabled of the bee, left his sting in him: we may therefore safely defy the harmless foe, and exult in the language of the apostle, "O death, where is thy sting?" yea, death is not only deprived of a power of injuring us, but has obtained a power of doing us good: "to die is gain." No wonder therefore, Dr. George often said, he had two friends in the world, Christ and Death: "Christ," said he, "is my first friend, and Death is my second." It is impossible for the Christian at present to estimate the extent of his obligation to death. Death delivers him from all the evils he feels or fears; it grants him the full possession of all the promises of God. It is the day when the tempest-tossed mariner reaches the desired haven; the day when the weather-beaten traveller arrives at home; the day when the heir of immortality comes of age and gains "the inheritance which is incorruptible and fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for him." It is the angel that draws back the veil, shows him the path of life, and introduces him into his "presence, where there is fulness of joy and pleasure for evermore."

But are all who die thus blessed? Far from it. In order to enjoy these immunities and advantages, we must be found in a certain state. Let me briefly explain it. According to the sacred writers, it consists in our being found in Christ; that is, in a state of union and communion with him. In consequence of this, we partake of his righteousness for our justification, and his grace for our sanctification: the one giving us a title to heaven, the other a meetness for it. These always go together; and the one is as necessary as the other. Hence our Saviour has told us, "Except a man be born again he cannot *enter* into the kingdom of God." It is in vain, therefore, to deny, to question, to philosophize.—It is the decision of one who cannot be deluded and who cannot deceive: the nature of heaven demands it; the work of heaven demands it; the joy of heaven demands it; and hence he adds, "Except a man be born again he cannot *see* the kingdom of God."—It would be impossible for him to enjoy it, even were he to possess it; for happiness results not only from the excellency of the object, but from its adaptation to the subject; from its suitableness to his faculties, its congeniality with his dispositions, its accomplishment of his hopes and wishes. "Marvel not therefore that I said unto you, ye *must* be born again." Found in this state we are secure, we are happy. According to the voice from heaven, "Blessed are the dead that die *in the Lord.*" And thus blessed we are fully persuaded is our departed brother, whose remains we are consigning "to the house appointed for all living."—Not as to a place where the body will be lost, but a quiet dormitory, in which it will rest till the morning of the resurrection, when waked by the archangel's trump, it will arise and shake itself from its dust, and put on its beautiful garments, and arise to meet the Lord in the air: or, to vary the image; we commit this seed to the earth where it will not be destroyed, but will revive and flourish: "It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption: it is sown in dishonour; it is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness; it is raised in power: it is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body."

It would be needless, not to say improper, to anticipate what will be much more suitably delivered next Lord's-day afternoon, by our reverend friend and brother, who has engaged to deliver a sermon appropriated to the subject. But I cannot resist what my convictions and feelings equally prompt me to remark, that I now lay my hand on the

mortal remains of one of the most amiable of men—one of the most holy and consistent professors of religion—and a distinguished minister of the gospel, whether we consider his qualifications or his usefulness.

We are called to "*mark* the perfect man, and behold the upright; for the end of that man is peace." And in such an age of rebuke and blasphemy, when so many fail of the grace of God, and dishonour the Redeemer's name; and when so many, even in the ministerial office, fall by their iniquity, to the disgrace of their character and station, it is a delightful satisfaction to attend the concluding scenes of one whose reputation was unsullied; at whose funeral there is nothing to conceal, nothing to palliate; and concerning whom, the spectators, however numerous, are all ready to acknowledge, "He was a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost and of faith."—I do not wonder to see you weep. "This grief becomes you, and these tears are just; not to mourn would argue the guilty insensibility of the Jews, condemned by the prophet, who, when the righteous perished, and merciful men were taken away, laid it not to heart." He is indeed, disposed of infinitely to his advantage—his warfare is accomplished—he has entered the joy of his Lord: but his gain is our loss. We have lost a protector, an intercessor, a benefactor, a teacher, an example. The world sustains a loss, the country sustains a loss, the church feels a loss; religion feels a loss, and comes and mourns along with us. The sons and daughters of indigence and affliction are bereaved: friends sigh——I feel it easier to weep than to address you. Forgive the egotism, I have lost a friend—a long known, a tried friend—with whom I have taken sweet counsel—whose advice has directed me—whose approbation has stimulated me—and with whom, from my first intercourse with him, I felt a peculiar oneness of mind, which every succeeding interview has only increased. At the grave of a parent, not by birth, but adoption, I lately cried, "My father, my father!" I now cry "alas, my brother!" —"I am distressed for thee, my brother Jonathan, very pleasant hast thou been to me." O! how earth is impoverished! O! how heaven is enriched by such removals as these! How they loosen us from the world, and enable us to enter into the spirit of Thomas, when he said, "Let us go away that we may die with him!" Well, we shall join them again. They will soon receive us into everlasting habitations. Even now the interruption of our union is in appearance rather than reality.

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"The saints on earth, and all the dead,
But one communion make;
All join in Christ, their living head,
And of his grace partake.

"In such society as this,
My weary soul would rest,
The man that dwells where Jesus is,
Must be for ever blest."

The close of the life of this man of God corresponded with its course, and is worthy of our notice. He had retired to Canterbury after the rupture of a blood-vessel; but finding at length that his recovery was despaired of, he expressed a wish to be taken home to expire among his people. He conceived that he ought to edify them in death as well as in life, and hoped to be able to bear a final testimony to the truth and importance of those doctrines which he had publicly preached. This wish was indulged. He reached home on the Tuesday and died on the Wednesday; professing a hope full of immortality, and addressing pertinent instructions and admonitions to those around him. "Blessed is that servant whom his Lord when he cometh shall find so doing!"

It may be useful to inquire what the sentiments were, that formed a life so beneficial, and produced a death so happy. And some, perhaps, may be surprised to learn, that they were those principles which of late have incurred so much reprobation; and to suppress which, an appeal has been made to the legislature!

We here see the excellency of the religion described and recommended in the gospel. It always appears profitable; but how does its glory shine forth in those dark scenes which nothing else can illuminate; nothing else can cheer; nothing else can gild! O! how desirable is it, when nature is dissolving, to be able to say with Jacob, "I have waited for thy salvation, O Lord!"—when the body is mouldering back to dust, to exclaim with Job, "I know that my Redeemer liveth;"—with Simeon, to feel a Saviour in the arms of our faith, raising us above the love of life and the fear of death; to look backward, to look forward, and exult with Paul, "I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day!" Where is the individual that will not withdraw from these mansions of the dead, and immediately and earnestly pray, "Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his!!"

THE JUBILEE:

A SERMON,

DELIVERED SUNDAY, OCTOBER 22, 1809, IN ARGYLE-CHAPEL, BATH.

BY WILLIAM JAY.

It shall be a jubilee unto you.—Lev. xxv. 10.

"He that winneth souls is wise." This wisdom is from above, and is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, easy to be entreated, full of mercy, and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy. No person ever possessed more of this excellency than Paul. His prudence appears in the selection and variation of the means he employed to accomplish his end. He considered the circumstances, the tempers, the prejudices of his hearers. He addressed every principle, and every passion of human nature. He reasoned; he declaimed. He reproved; he admonished; he warned; he encouraged. He compassed sea and land to furnish himself with illustrations and assistance. He borrowed from the institutions of Judaism. He borrowed from the usages of Heathenism. He borrowed from the manners of the age. He borrowed from the festive games.—Not a wrestling or a race passed by unnoticed or unimproved.—Any occurrence, however accidental or transitory, he seized, to guide the attention which it awakened, to some wise and important purpose.

> "And as a bird each fond endearment tries,
> To tempt its new-fledged offspring to the skies;
> He tried each art, reproved each dull delay,
> Allured to brighter worlds, and led the way."

Hear his own language—"Though I be free from all men, yet have I made myself servant unto all that I may gain the more. And unto the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews; to them that are under the law, as under the law, that I might gain them that are under the law; to them that are without law, as without law (being not without law to God, but under the law to Christ,) that I might gain them that are without law. To the weak became I as weak, that I might gain the weak: I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some."

My brethren, your preacher does not intend a comparison; but he wishes to feel the stimulus of an example so excellent. He does not challenge praise; but hopes for approbation, in a particular instance.—If Paul be worthy of imitation, I am more than justified in the choice of my subject this evening. As our venerable and virtuous sovereign enters the fiftieth year of his reign on Wednesday next, an observance is intended, called—Jubilee; and I am going to lead back your minds to the origin of the name. My design is, not to indulge in applauding or censuring the measure, but to enable you to improve it, especially in aid of religious reflection.

Let me explain the nature of the Jubilee—make some remarks on the design of it—and examine what there is in the gospel to correspond with it. Consider what I say, and may the Lord give you understanding in all things.

I. It is hardly necessary to take up any of your time, by inquiring after the etymology of the word Jubilee; in Hebrew, Jobel. It signifies, according to some rabbins, a ram's horn, with which the festival was proclaimed. But how, asks the learned Calmet, could a ram's horn, which is crooked, solid, and not hollow, be used as a trumpet? It was therefore probably, says he, a trumpet in the form of a ram's horn. Others derive Jobel from Jubal, who was the inventor of musical instruments; and suppose that the year was named after him, because it was a year of rejoicing, of which music is commonly an emblem: or because it was ushered in with the sound of music through the whole land. Hottinger is of opinion, that Jobel does not signify the instrument, but the noise it made; and that the word is invented to imitate the sound. Patrick espouses this sentiment; and justifies it by a reference to the passover, which was called Pesach, from the angel's passing over the Israelites, when he slew the Egyptians. There is another conjecture, says Jennings, much more probable, and which supposes that it comes from the verb Hobil, to bring or call back; because then every thing was restored. Accordingly, the Septuagint renders it *remission; and Josephus says it signifies †liberty.

The learned are not more agreed concerning the period in which the Jubilee was celebrated. Whether it was observed every forty-ninth or fiftieth year, is a question on each side of which, the advocates seem equally numerous and eminent. I shall not trouble you with their respective arguments; but only remark, that the authors of the Univer-

*ἄφεσις. †ἐλευθερίαν.

sal History have endeavoured to reconcile these two opinions, by observing, that as the Jubilee began in the first month of the civil year, which was the seventh month of the ecclesiastical, it might be said to be either the forty-ninth or the fiftieth, according as the one or the other of these computations is followed.

For a general account of this ordinance, I refer you to the charge which God gave to Moses at the institution. "And thou shalt number seven Sabbaths of years unto thee, seven times seven years; and the space of the seven Sabbaths of years shall be unto thee forty and nine years. Then shalt thou cause the trumpet of the Jubilee to sound, on the tenth day of the seventh month, in the day of atonement shall ye make the trumpet sound throughout all your land. And ye shall hallow the fiftieth year, and proclaim liberty throughout all the land unto all the inhabitants thereof; it shall be a Jubilee unto you; and ye shall return every man unto his possession, and ye shall return every man unto his family. A Jubilee shall that fiftieth year be unto you; ye shall not sow, neither reap that which groweth of itself in it, nor gather the grapes in it of thy vine undressed. For it is the Jubilee; it shall be holy unto you: ye shall eat the increase thereof out of the field. In the year of this Jubilee ye shall return every man unto his possession." Let us arrange and explain the contents of this statement.

The Jubilee was a season of relaxation, repose, and pleasure. The first nine days were spent in festivity. The people indulged in every kind of lawful mirth. They wore crowns on their heads, and decorated their garments with flowers. During the remainder of the season no servile work was done. There was no ploughing, or sowing. The earth spontaneously yielded her increase, and of the produce all were allowed to partake. The proprietor of a field, or a vineyard, had no more claim to the grapes or the corn than his poor neighbour. They had all things common.

The Jubilee announced release from bondage. All slaves were free, with their wives and children. They who had renounced the privilege given to them by the sabbatical year, of recovering their liberty, and whose ears have been bored in token of perpetual servitude, were emancipated from their masters. Even all foreign slaves enjoyed the same privilege of exemption; and could not be detained another moment in vassalage.

The Jubilee proclaimed the remission of debts, whether small or great, lately contracted or of long standing. It arrested the arm of the merciless creditor, who was taking his fellow by the throat, saying, Pay me that thou owest. It hastily opened the door of the dungeon, and permitted the light of heaven to visit the wretch immured in the cold and gloomy prison; struck off his fetters; and led him forth to his relations and friends, anxious to hail him on his release.

The Jubilee caused the lost inheritance to revert to the original owner. The sale of his estate could only extend to the arrival of this period: but there was no wrong done in this case to the purchaser, because the time of restitution was fixed and known, and he bought accordingly. The joy of recovery is more lively and intense than the calm satisfaction resulting from uninterrupted possession. Things most powerfully strike us when they are viewed and felt in contrast. It is the want that teaches us the worth of our enjoyments. Behold an Israelite, who had been reduced to the condition of a stranger even in his own land; who had walked like an alien in sight of a house, and by the side of a field and a vineyard which he once called his own—with what pleasure would he feel himself reinstated into his patrimonial heritage! Lectured and prepared by all the trials of indigence and exile, and uncertainty; with what gratitude would he exult, "The lines are fallen unto me in pleasant places; yea, I have a goodly heritage."

There is another circumstance which must by no means be omitted. It is the solemnity that immediately preceded the Jubilee. For you will remember that the proclamation was made on the day of atonement. As soon as the victim of expiation was offered, and reconciliation was made for the sins of the people—then—and not before, was the command given to the priests to blow. They stood ready with the trumpets in their hands, and their faces turned towards the east and the west, the north and the south, waiting the signal: and no sooner was it given, than their sound went into all the land, and the joyful intelligence was published in every region, and in every village.

From this representation it appears, that the Jubilee must have been an event of peculiar interest to the Jews: and we proceed

II. To make a few remarks upon the design of it. Our ignorance of a period so remote, and of a people so peculiar, will not allow of our appreciating the importance of such an institution in every instance. We do not therefore pretend to develope all the advantages attached to it: but it is easy to see, that whether it be examined with regard to humanity, policy, or religion, it will be found to possess no small degree of utility.

First. Considered *humanely*, it was important. It had a merciful and kind aspect on the lower ranks of life, and would tend to keep their spirits from being broken, depressed, degraded. Who can bear everlasting application, or hopeless fatigue? Incessant and unvaried toil from day to day, from year to year, annihilates all sense of personal

dignity. It brutalizes the mind by assimilation, produced by a constancy and uniformity of low impressions. Nothing occurs to remind the man that he is a rational and immortal being. Every moment being necessarily demanded for the cravings of the body, the soul is neglected till it is forgotten. Habits are generated so perfectly material, that he becomes incapable of every mental effort, and dead to every glowing purpose: at best, he is the subject of a sullen quietude, or a cheerless contentment. There is nothing so provoking to God, who is the lovely Father of all mankind, as the oppression and misery of the poor and needy: "For the sighing of the poor, for the crying of the needy, now will I arise, saith the Lord, now will I show myself." "It is not of the Lord that the people labour in the fire, and weary themselves for very vanity." It *is* the pleasure of the Almighty that man should have some active employment. It is the law of his creation. A particular necessity indeed falls on him as the consequence of sin: "Cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat of the herb of the field; in the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground." But he who pronounced this curse is a father as well as a sovereign. In the midst of judgment he remembers mercy. He renders the obligation to which we have subjected ourselves, a physical and a moral blessing: and he limits the degree, the extent of the obligation itself. He ordains labour, but never designed that absolute drudgery should be necessary to acquire a pitiful subsistence. He has prepared of his goodness for the poor; and his designs are gracious, though men pervert them. Thus,—He gave the Jews occasional relaxation and ease. He allowed them time for rest, and reflection. He resigned them one day in every seven days; one year in every seven years; and one year in every fifty years, in addition to both—during which, they could wipe their brows, unload their heavy burdens, and attend to their persons, their children, and the book of God.

Secondly. Considered *politically*, it was important.

Slaves for certain reasons were allowed under the Jewish dispensation; but, by this law, what was tolerated was qualified, and *perpetual* slavery was prevented.

In every well-ordered state it will be an object to fix those who reside in it, not by necessity, but choice and preference. The secret to prevent at once emigration and disaffection, is to cause some flowers to spring up around the cottage, however humble; to keep the soil from becoming barren and dreary; to secure some enjoyments, some advantages that will render the idea of home estimable and attractive; and make the individual feel an interest which he is unwilling to resign, and determined to defend. That which we have a propriety in, we seldom disregard.—This was the case with the Jews. The provision of Jubilee attached them to their own country, and their native soil. They viewed with veneration and affection the estates that had descended from their ancestors, and were to be continued to their posterity. Even when they had no share in possession, they had one in remembrance; they had one in hope; and could never feel detached from the commonwealth of Israel.

The levelling of property is impossible, and absurd. Yet a state is never in a prosperous condition when the community is divided between two classes only, the *very* rich, and the *very* poor: and the various intermediate degrees that constitute the strength, the happiness, the glory of a country disappear. The law of Jubilee prevented at once abject poverty, and excessive accumulation of wealth. It was impossible for any to gain very large possessions, either by usurpation, mortgage, purchase, or heirship. The tendency to departure from the original medium of estate, both in deficiency and excess, was seasonably checked, and the balance restored. We read that something like this was established among the Lacedemonians by their famous legislator Lycurgus. He not only banished slavery, but instituted a kind of equality, or rather mediocrity of fortune. His endeavour was, as far as he was able, to hinder any one from becoming too powerful, or too rich. Such was the design of the ostracism which he introduced. It consisted in expelling citizens whose wealth and influence rendered their aggrandizement prejudicial to the state. A similar plan also was proposed by Stolo. To repress the avarice of the old Romans, he made a law which forbad any particular person from having more than five hundred acres of land. Fraudulence soon destroyed this wise constitution; and he himself was condemned for violating his own statute.

But to return. Never was there a people upon earth so secure of their liberty and property as the Israelites were: for while they were protected from the invasion of their enemies by the promise and providence of God; by the Jubilee they were not suffered to lose these privileges, even by their follies and vices, unless partially and for a time.

Thirdly. Considered *religiously* it was important. It established the divine authority of Moses—it verified the prophecies with regard to the descent of the Messiah—it was typical of the Christian dispensation.

It established the divine authority of Moses. For we may boldly affirm, that no legislator, unless conscious of being divinely

inspired, would ever have committed himself by enacting such a law. It was founded on a standing miracle. It forbad all agricultural process, on the assurance that the year preceding should render it needless, by yielding an abundance sufficient to answer its demands without tillage. For this double produce in one season he pledged himself. Would an impostor have done this? How easily would he have been detected! Had his assertion been false, a people so prone to rebel, and so governed by present appearances, would never have submitted to the loss of a year's produce; neither would the possessors of acquired estates have resigned them.—Their obedience in such circumstances abundantly proves the truth of his claims.

It verified the prophecies with regard to the descent of the Messiah. It rendered necessary the continuance of the distinction of every tribe and family: this preserved their genealogies secure and clear: and thus ultimately, and no doubt intentionally, it served to ascertain the birth of our Lord and Saviour from the tribe of Judah, and the family of David. Indeed every dispensation of divine Providence or grace from the beginning of the world, regarded the coming of the Messiah, and issued in "the fulness of him that filleth all in all."

Finally, it was a type of the Christian dispensation. Observe, my brethren, the words of the apostle to the Hebrews. "God," says he, "has provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect." Here he compares the law with the gospel, and reminds us that the one is superior to the other; yea, that the one is the completion of the other. Judaism without Christianity would have been defective—as a dawn without the day: and it would have been uninteresting and unintelligible—like an allegory without the clue, or a prefiguration without the reality. The various usages and institutions of the ceremonial economy derive their significancy, their value, their *perfection* from reference: they were all "shadows of good things to come, but the body is Christ." This renders the Old Testament so delightful and edifying to a Christian. By means of the subsequent explanations of the New Testament writers, he can go back and compare promise with accomplishment; the figure with the substance. He can read the glory of his Redeemer in the patriarchal dignity, in the prophetical wisdom, in the priestly sanctity, in the kingly dominion. He can find him in the sufferings and elevation of Joseph: in the splendour of Solomon: in the burial and resurrection of Jonah. He can see him as the bread that came down from heaven in the manna; as the water of life in the streams that flowed from the rock in the wilderness; as an offering for sin in the slaughtered bullock or bleeding lamb. In the brazen serpent he beholds him as dying on the cross, "that whoever believeth on him shall not perish but have everlasting life." He meets him, he hears him in the Jubilee. It is in allusion to this season, that our Lord expresses himself, in the words of Isaiah; "The spirit of the Lord God is upon me: because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; TO PROCLAIM THE ACCEPTABLE YEAR OF THE LORD."

Let us therefore,

III. Inquire what there is in the gospel to correspond with the Jubilee. I am sorry to be obliged to remark that the figurative language of divine revelation has been frequently abused by violence, and debased by littleness. Expositors and preachers have too commonly supposed that a conformity was to be sought for in every attribute, and in every circumstance of the subject. Whereas a real and striking degree of similitude is all that is required in any writer; and the same will hold with regard to the metaphors, parables, and types of the Scripture. This being premised, we are not afraid to bring the Jubilee and the gospel together. A very superficial examination will decide that there is a wonderful analogy between them.

Did the Jubilee afford rest? *This* the gospel realizes. It calls us to cease from Jewish ceremonies, from superstitious rites, from slavish fears, from perplexing anxieties, from worldly disquietudes. It tells us that all things are now ready; and that we are welcome to partake of the common salvation of God's people. The Christian thus finds himself blessed with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ; and by believing enters into rest. He confides also in his providence. He knows from the love, the power, and the promise of his heavenly Father, that though the young lions may lack and suffer hunger, they that seek the Lord shall not want any good thing. He is therefore careful for nothing, but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving he makes known his requests unto God, and the peace of God that passeth all understanding keeps his heart and mind through Christ Jesus.

Did the Jubilee confer liberty? *This* the gospel realizes. We had sold ourselves for nought. We were led captive by the devil at his will. We were the slaves of sin. We served divers lusts and pleasures. But "where the spirit of the Lord is there is liberty." "Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free; and if the Son make you free, ye shall be free *indeed*." No

longer unable to hearken to the voice of conscience, or follow the dictates of our understandings; no longer the vassals of pride, of avarice, of envy, of malice; no longer under the tyranny of our passions, our appetites, our senses—we are the Lord's free *men;* we are brought into the glorious liberty of the *Sons* of God.

Did the Jubilee insure remission of debts? *This* the gospel realizes. Did we owe much, and were we able to pay nothing? Had our iniquities increased over our heads, and became a burden too heavy for us to bear? Was the adversary ready to deliver us to the judge, and the judge to the officer? "Deliver," said the voice, "from going down into the pit, for I have found a ransom. With the Lord there is mercy, and with him there is plenteous redemption. I even I am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for my own name sake; and will not remember thy sins." "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon."

Did the Jubilee restore alienated estates. *This* the gospel realizes. Heaven was to have been our possession—we were originally heirs of it. We forfeited our title; and were left without hope. But behold the poor and the needy enriched. Behold the treasures of eternity promised them. See them not only "justified by his grace;" but "made heirs according to the hope of eternal life." "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time."

Was the Jubilee proclaimed on the day of expiation, and as soon as the atonement was offered? *This* the gospel realizes. No sooner had our Saviour given himself "an offering and a sacrifice to God of a sweet-smelling savour," than the heavens smiled, and the earth rejoiced. The messengers of reconciliation were sent forth to "preach the gospel to every creature." They began in Jerusalem; but the good news was published in every country: and the message shall continue to spread till it has reached "the ends of the earth, and all flesh shall see the salvation of our God together."

Let us not hastily pass over this part of our subject. We wish you never to forget, that, as the Jewish Jubilee began in the typical atonement of Aaron, so the Christian Jubilee is founded in the real atonement of Christ. We read of a purpose of grace before the world began; but it was given us "in him." We hear of eternal life; but it is "in him." We say we have righteousness and strength; but it is "in him." Examine the scheme of salvation in all its parts, and in all its progress; and the necessity of a mediator is *never* left out. And *how* was he a mediator? Precisely in the same way as the high priest who typified him. It was by sacrifice that Aaron, on the behalf of the people, interposed, interceded, blessed. And when Christ came to seek and to save that which was lost, he "gave his life a ransom for many." When he returned, "he entered with his own blood into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us." Hence it is said "in him we have redemption *through his blood,* even the forgiveness of sins:" we "have boldness to enter into the holiest of all *by the blood of Jesus:*" they who are before the throne, "have washed their robes, and made them white *in the blood* of the Lamb."

We learn from hence, that the atonement of Christ is an essential blessing, a comprehensive blessing; that every thing else depends upon it, and results from it; that to this we owe all our deliverance, and all our hope. No wonder therefore that the apostle should make it a leading object, and even among the polite and learned Corinthians *begin* with it: "I delivered unto you first of all, that which I also received, how that Jesus Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures." No wonder he should make it his last, as well as his first concern—no wonder he should make it his *only* one; "I determined to know nothing among you save Jesus Christ, and him crucified." No wonder he abhorred the thought of exulting in any thing beside; and exclaimed "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ." No wonder the church of God in all ages, have found their happiest moments to have been those in which they could say, "Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father, be glory and dominion for ever and ever." No wonder that those who have finished their course with joy, and no longer see through a glass darkly, should sing a new song, saying, "Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us unto God by thy blood, out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation." . No wonder the angels round about the throne, and the beasts and the elders, and whose number is ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands, should say with "a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and power, and glory, and blessing."

What then can we think of those who conceal, who deny, who insult the atoning death of our Lord and Saviour?

What are your sentiments and dispositions with regard to this important event?

Ah my brethren this event becomes a test: a test to try our schemes, our character, our destiny: a test the most awful: a test established by an authority from which there lies no appeal. "We preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling block; and unto the Greeks foolishness: but unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God." He that despised Moses' law died without mercy, under two or three witnesses: of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the spirit of grace."

To conclude. Having discovered the nature and excellency of the gospel, we learn, my brethren, the way in which it is to be regarded by us. It demands joy and gladness. It is a Jubilee; and preachers and hearers should animate each other, and say, "O magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt his name together." "This is the day which the Lord has made, we will rejoice and be glad in it."

With what satisfaction and pleasure would *a Jewish priest* proclaim the arrival of the Jubilee? And shall *a Christian minister* be cold and senseless, who has "this grace given, to preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ?" O what a privilege to go and publish, that God "has not spared his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, and that with him he will also freely give us all things: that God is in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, not in putting their trespasses unto them." I would rather be employed in announcing this intelligence to sinners, than be destined to blow the trump of the archangel that shall awake the dead. I would rather call you to the feet of the Saviour, than to the tribunal of the Judge.

It is easy to imagine with what emotions the proclamation of Jubilee was heard by *the inhabitants* of Judea, and especially by those who were so *deeply interested* in the message. And what comparison is there between the concerns of time, and those of eternity? What is the relief of the body to the welfare of the soul? Will *you* not therefore, with a joy proportionably greater, exclaim, "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace; that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth!" Thus the gospel was originally embraced. The Thessalonians received it "in much affliction," yet "with joy of the Holy Ghost." When by the affecting ministry of the apostle "before the eyes of the Galatians, Jesus Christ was evidently set forth crucified among" them; they were "blessed," and "could have plucked out their own eyes, and have given them" to the messenger who brought them such welcome tidings. When Philip went down and "preached Christ in Samaria, there was great joy in that city." And is the nature of the gospel changed? Is the importance of it diminished? Are the blessings it communicates, and the hopes it inspires less valuable and necessary?

The gospel, my brethren, is not a speculation. It is not a matter of idle curiosity. It is not the solution of a problem, or the decision of a point in debate, the knowledge of which can merely affect the judgment. It brings us "good tidings of great joy." It is not only wonderful but interesting. It is not only "a faithful saying;" but "worthy of all acceptation." It is "all our salvation;" and it should be "all our desire." It is "our glory;" and should be "our joy."

There are some who have thus heard the gospel, and whose condition is described by David in these words: "Blessed is the people that know the joyful sound: they shall walk, O Lord, in the light of thy countenance. In thy name shall they rejoice all the day: and in thy righteousness shall they be exalted." But it is to be feared there are those in this large assembly to whom the intelligence is a thing of nought. Ye make "light of it and go your way, one to his farm, and another to his merchandise." What shall we say to your folly, to your wickedness, to your danger, in refusing the advantages which the gospel exhibits to your view, and presses upon your acceptance? Are these blessings unsuited to your condition? Are they of no value? Can the world indemnify you for the loss of them? Can you find a substitute for them—in the distress of conscience—in the season of affliction—in the hour of death—and in the day of judgment? Do you not defy the authority of God? Do you not despise the riches of his goodness? Do you not judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life? Are you not unspeakably criminal? Will you go unpunished? "How can you escape if you neglect so great salvation?"

"NOW IS THE ACCEPTED TIME: NOW IS THE DAY OF SALVATION." And will it last for ever? Will it last long? How know you but that he who has so often addressed you in vain, is ready "to shut to the door" saying, "O that thou hadst known—even thou—at least in this thy day, the things that belong to thy peace—but now—they are hid from thine eyes?"—It is time, it is high time, but blessed be his name it is not at present too late. O! seek him while he may be found, and call upon him while he is near.

From these solemn reflections, I must advert to the occasion of the subject that gave rise to them. And I hope it will not be deemed improper or unimportant, if I give you a few hints of admonition concerning it.

And first: While you show your loyalty beware of impiety. Many it is to be feared will sadly evince their regard to the king, by sinning against God; and thus augment our national transgression, which is heavy enough already to sink us beyond the hope of a political resurrection.—You glory in the moral example of your sovereign, "whose life's a lesson to the land he sways"—why then—resemble him, and do not disgrace the event you commemorate, by indulging in every kind of dissipation and intemperance.

Secondly. "Rejoice with trembling." You ought to rejoice in the virtuous character, the domestic excellencies, and the mild dominion of our long spared monarch; but it is not to be denied, that through the awful destinations of Providence, his reign has been peculiarly trying and calamitous. You ought to rejoice in our exemptions and privileges; they are many and they are great, especially when compared with our desert, or the condition of neighbouring nations: but it is not, for any purpose to be concealed, that we live in "a cloudy and a dark day;" that the complexion of our public affairs is gloomy rather than soothing; and that an impression of humiliation, rather than of exultation, should be attempted; or at least that the one should qualify the other. Without this, we may be reminded of the words of Isaiah, on the threatened invasion of Jewry by the Persians: "And in that day did the Lord God of Hosts call to weeping and to mourning, and to baldness, and to girding with sackcloth: and behold, joy and gladness, slaying oxen and killing sheep, eating flesh, and drinking wine: let us eat and drink; for tomorrow we shall die. And it was revealed in mine ears by the Lord of Hosts, surely this iniquity shall not be purged from you, till ye die, saith the Lord God of Hosts."

Thirdly. Blend prayer with your praises. While you give thanks to the God of our mercies, for the long-continued profusion of blessings that has distinguished our national heritage; for our insular situation; for the temperature of our climate; for the fruitfulness of our soil and our seasons; for our admired constitution and code of laws; for our civil and religious freedom; for our numberless deliverances and preservations—while in particular you bless "the God in whose hand our breath is," for extending the reign of our beloved monarch to a period which so very few of his predecessors ever reached: pray that with "long life he would satisfy him, and show him his salvation." Pray that he would support and comfort him under the infirmities of years, and the cares of government. Pray that he would "give the king his judgments, and his righteousness unto the king's son." Pray that it may not be said of us, as it was of Judea, "There is none to guide her of all the sons whom she has brought forth." Pray that he whose prerogative it is to make great, would raise up wise and able ministers, "discerning the times, and knowing what Israel ought to do." Pray that our magistrates may be "men fearing God and hating covetousness;" that our officers may be peace, and our exactors righteousness." Pray that dissention may not prevail in our councils, or "a perverse spirit" in our country. Pray, that, as all hearts and all events are under his control, he would open a way, and restore to us the blessedness of peace. Pray that his word may have free course and be glorified. Pray that he would be "merciful unto us, and bless us, and cause his face to shine upon us, that we may be saved." To this needful exercise let a portion of the day be sacred, in the sanctuary, in the family, in the closet.

I only add,

Fourthly. Let liberality accompany your festivity. Stretch out your hand to the poor. Visit the abode of misery. Contribute to the release of some unfortunate debtor. Cause some widow's heart to sing for joy. Let the blind hail a day they are forbidden to see. Let the aged feel themselves young again, and talk of the things they did in the old time, before many of us. *Some—many—ah! how many, eat nothing from day to day, but "the bread of sorrows"—Let them taste comfort, and "forget their misery." "Go your way, eat the fat, and drink the sweet, and send portions unto them for whom nothing is prepared: for this day is holy unto our Lord: neither be ye sorry; for the joy of the Lord is your strength."

God save the King; and let all the people say Amen.

* Here the preacher had the pleasure to announce, that a comfortable dinner would be provided for all the children of the sunday-school, the poor of the church, and the poor of the congregation.

THE MINISTER'S REQUEST.

A DISCOURSE

DELIVERED AT ST. THOMAS SQUARE, HACKNEY, OCTOBER 31, 1811;

ON THE SETTLEMENT OF THE

REV. HENRY FORSTER BURDER, A.M.

AS ASSISTANT PREACHER TO THE REV. SAMUEL PALMER.

BY WILLIAM JAY.

Brethren, pray for us.—1 Thess. v. 25.

From what a trifling elevation will one man look down upon another with consequence, if not contempt. God has made of one blood all the nations of the earth; he has derived the whole human race from one original pair; he has invested them with the same faculties, he has rendered them capable of the same satisfactions, he has subjected them to the same wants and infirmities—and thus he has related and equalized them all. Yet kings do not call their subjects; masters do not call their servants—*Brethren*. Even ministers too exclusively appropriate the appellation of *Brother* to individuals of their own order, as if they were peculiar, if not superior beings.

But observe Paul. The apostles were the most extraordinary personages the world or the church ever possessed. They stood secondary in dignity and authority to the Son of God. They received communications immediately from heaven. They could pierce futurity, and unveil things to come. They could discern spirits. They could raise the dead. Yet Paul, though an apostle, here calls the Thessalonians, Brethren; and supplicates the prayers of common believers.—*Brethren, pray for us.*

And if inspired men, if miraculous men—if apostles were led to ask for the prayers of their people, what wonder if this should be the case with modern ministers, who can make no claims to any thing preternatural?

This then is the single, but comprehensive request we have to make this morning in the behalf of our venerable friend, who has long borne the burden and heat of the day, and for near half a century has sustained the pastoral office in this church; and on the behalf of our amiable brother, who has been unanimously chosen to assist him in holy things, and will in future labour with him, as a son with the father, in the gospel. Imagine them now rising up, and by my lips addressing you in language, which I am sure expresses the feelings and wishes of their hearts—*Brethren, pray for us:* while the preacher, and every fellow-minister attending the service cries—*And for me also.*

Let us consider the propriety of the demand. Let us examine it on two grounds.

I. The ground of *necessity.*

II. The ground of *equity.*

I. Let us examine it on the ground of *necessity.* It will be found necessary if you consider

First, their *work.* They who imagine that the ministry of the gospel is an idle, or an easy task, are grossly mistaken; and were it not that the honour of God is concerned in it, we should say to them, Make the trial. The experiment, if fairly made, would soon convince them of the truth of Dr. Doddridge's words—

> 'Tis not a work of small import,
> The pastor's care demands;
> But what might fill an angel's heart,
> And fill'd the Saviour's hands.

Every minister may say with Nehemiah, *I am doing a great work.* Indeed it regards every thing that *is* great: the soul; God; and eternity. It is a work that cannot be prosecuted without constant application and labour—and such application and labour, as often exhaust the spirits, and bring youth and old age together.

For the office is not to be judged of by the

manner in which it is frequently filled up. There are too many who make it a sinecure, disregarding its duties, and *looking to their own way, every one for his gain, from his quarter.* They are *dumb dogs; they cannot bark; sleeping, lying down, loving to slumber.* But how is it represented by him who instituted the high calling? The Scripture defines a minister as a *labourer;* a *workman* that needeth not to be ashamed: it holds him forth as *watchman; a fisherman; a husbandman; a builder; a soldier; a wrestler; a racer.*—What are the obligations of a *good* minister of Jesus Christ? He meets the actual and diversified state of his people, and commends himself to every man's conscience in the sight of God. He seeks out acceptable words as well as words of truth. By adaptation, and not by trimming, he becomes all things to all men. He warns them that are unruly: comforts the feeble-minded; upholds the weak; reclaims the wandering; and guards the exposed. By a faithful and judicious application of the promises and threatenings, reproofs and encouragements of the gospel, *he takes forth the precious from the vile, and is as God's mouth.* He levies a tax of improvement for the edification of his hearers upon all events and occurrences. His study is not confined to an hour of constrained, perturbed thought on a Saturday evening—he is observing and collecting all the week. *He gives himself to the word of God and prayer.* He does not sit smoking and trifling in company till the appointed moment of worship arrives; he is previously, and much with God alone: and when he enters the sanctuary he is like Aaron when the rich oil had been poured upon his head; and the priest was betrayed by the savour as well as by the service. The spirit of devotion rests upon him in the absence of all his official administrations. The parlour does not war with the pulpit: he is the man of God in all his social intercourse. Wherever he is, he produces a religious atmosphere, whose innocent, genial, and improving influence is felt by all who breathe within its reach. He *rules well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity; for if a man knows not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?* He is *an example of believers in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity.*

It would be endless to specify all the various parts of the ministerial function. But the imperfect sketch we have given of them, leads us to exclaim, *Who is sufficient for these things?*—Is a fallen creature? Is a man of like passions and infirmities with yourselves? Is a worm? *Brethren, pray for us.* It is necessary if you consider

Secondly, Their *trials.* A minister is a truly honourable character; but I fear the employment is often viewed too much on the side of the pleasing and attractive. Hence many *desire the office of a bishop;* and they certainly desire a *good work.* But it is at the same time a burden as well as an honour. Its advantages are purchased at the expense of numberless privations and sacrifices; and therefore it behoves the minister as well as the Christian to count the cost. If this were done, many, instead of pushing themselves forward, would be found, even when called for, hid among the stuff. They would require to be drawn forth: and even then would be ready to say, *Send, Lord, by whom thou wilt send.*

I hardly know a greater object of commiseration, than a minister who enters sufficiently into the spirit of his work—to reach and grapple with its difficulties. It is well the scene gradually opens. The Lord draws us on by a sense of our obligation to his redeeming love, and the value of perishing souls; but leaves us to acquire the knowledge of what is discouraging by slow degrees. Thus experience rectifies what was erroneous, and supplies what was defective in speculation. Hence the ministry has been compared to John's little book, a bitter sweet; and we have been told that the sweet comes first. The bitter is tasted when we are gone too far to recede with honour or safety: when we know that if we decline the prophet's message, we shall have to encounter the prophet's storm: when conscience comes forward, and says, *Necessity is laid upon me; yea, wo is unto me if I preach not the gospel.*

A minister has trials in common with men; he has trials in common with Christians; and in addition to both these, he has trials peculiar to himself. No man is so liable to misrepresentation. He is the subject of general, and therefore of ignorant criticism. He is often censured when he acts with the greatest wisdom and rectitude, by those who cannot discern the circumstances that guide, or appreciate the motives that sway him. He frequently makes persons his enemies because he tells them the truth. Many are unsteady in their attendance, and fickle in their attachments. Such hearers frequently endeavour to justify themselves by accusing the preacher: *they* are not capricious, but can no longer profit under *his* ministry. After, perhaps, hearing a new preacher every Sabbath, and five sermons a week, and acquiring a fastidiousness and a vagrancy of mind that nothing can satisfy or fix; they impute to him the effect of a change which has only taken place in themselves. If they cannot undermine his character they will assail his orthodoxy. If he preaches—as he ought to do—the doctrines of the gospel richly and openly, he may be deemed an Antinomian: and if he does justice to the whole scheme of divine truth—and the gospel may be abridged

where it is not mangled—and brings forward doctrines in their experimental and practical bearings, he may be vilified as a legalist. It is not an unusual thing for those who were once ready to pull out their eyes for his sake, to leave his labours, and to pass him unnoticed in the street.

This is not the only quarter from which he suffers. There are, perhaps, individuals in his church of whom he stands in doubt. With many things in them, that are amiable and useful, there are some things exceptionable and painful. They endure his fidelity; they are not offended with his reproofs; but go on. He seems neither justified to exclude, or continue them in the fellowship of the church. They give their pastor many proofs of their kindness.—O! that they would give him one more; and abandon those few inconsistencies which prove his perplexity and his distress. O! that they would set his heart at rest, and free him from the reflections of the censorious, and the complaints of the pious, which he is so often compelled to hear.

Again observe the preacher. At the time appointed he must appear, whatever be his frame, or his feelings. He must preach, yet seems to have nothing worthy of communication. He must rouse others to zeal, while his own mind is languid; and administer comfort to others, while his own soul is disquieted within him: though, like an officer in the field, he is compelled to hide his fears from the men. He often sits down in the pulpit with a blush. He closes the Sabbath in the closet, with the exclamation, *Lord, who hath believed our report?* He fears that he has been preaching into perdition many of those he would gladly save; charged, like Isaiah, with this dreadful commission: *Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and convert, and be healed.*—How distressing to manure, and plough, and sow, and never reap. How grievous to see the blossoms covering the tree in the morning, and in the evening strewing the ground.—When he looks back to a little success with which he was indulged at the commencement of his labours, he cries, *Wo is me! for I am as when they have gathered the summer fruits, as the grape gleanings of the vintage: there is no cluster to eat: my soul desired the first-ripe fruit.*—He often suspects that he is a vessel in which the Lord no longer takes pleasure. He dreads standing in the way of another's usefulness. In the bitterness of his soul he kneels and asks permission to retire.

Ah, my brethren, this is not a fancy piece: it is taken from the life. Many who hear me this morning know, by experience, the truth of the representation: they know the representation falls below the truth. *You* are not capable of entering into some of our trials: and *we* are not at liberty to divulge others. No. Like the prophet we must weep in *secret places*. We must bleed alone. *Brethren, pray for us.* It is necessary if we consider

Thirdly, Their *danger*. One sinner destroyeth much good. The fall of a common professor of religion is a judgment on the neighbourhood in which it happens. It causes the worthy name by which we are called to be blasphemed. It hardens and justifies sinners in their ungodliness. It proves a stumbling block to the weak, and a grief to the strong. But the mischief is much greater when a minister falls. He possesses more influence, and is more liable to observation. He cannot be hid. The sins of preachers are the preachers of sin.

And are instances of ministerial defection so very uncommon, as to excite no alarm, or to render caution needless? Would to God they were. But how many have we witnessed or heard of, even in our day. Some of these have been forced to enter into secular life. Some have crossed the sea, and commenced the pastor where the sinner is unknown. Some, after a spiritual quarantine, have been admitted again by their former connexions, as wholesome and safe. Some have established a new schismatical interest, and drawing after them a desperate faction, who pretend to be satisfied with *their own avowals* of innocency or repentance, have become more popular than before. In general they have become advocates for a higher strain of doctrine, that will not reproach their laxity of morals; and making up in pride what they want in purity, profess to see things clearly, and decry others as blind. Licentiousness is the liberty wherewith they imagine Christ has made them free.—And is there not in *us* an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God? Have *we* no fleshly lusts that war against the soul? Are not we passing through a world lying in wickedness? Are not we exposed to an adversary, the devil, going about as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour? And does not this enemy know his interests well enough to make the *head* his object; and in issuing his orders, to his instruments to say—Aim not at great or small, but at the King of Israel; smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered?—*Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed, lest he fall.*

Has a minister been preserved for a number of years? He ought to be thankful; but not to remit his watch, or dismiss his guard. *Blessed is the man that feareth always.* We are never beyond the reach of temptation while we are out of heaven. Our security in one trial does not warrant our immunity in another. Joab, who was faithful to his

sovereign in the rebellion of Absalom, yet turned aside after Adonijah. If a minister be not overcome of vice; may he not fall by error, by vanity, by indolence, by dulness? If he escapes from gross immorality; may not his excellencies be tarnished; his talents be injured; his usefulness defeated, by imprudencies? May there not be indulgences at the table, where there is no gluttony? May there not be tippling where there is no intoxication? May there not be levities and liberties where there are no violations of virtue! May there not be, especially in the young minister, an assumption of consequence, a creation of trouble, an inattention to order and regularity, which, while he supposes that it indicates genius, will not fail to lower him in the esteem and hope of the families he deranges and disgusts? If he avoids worldly dissipation, may he not indulge in religious; constantly going into festive circles of spiritual triflers and gossips; spending his evenings generally from home; retiring late to rest, and never rising early? If he be not chargeable with filthy conversation, which is not lawful, may he not err in foolish talking and jesting which are not convenient? May he not be the rattle, or the harlequin of the room? If he be not inflammatory, may he not be a mere newsmonger, or a noisy dabbler in party politics?

O! to avoid the very appearance of evil—to give none offence in any thing, that the ministry be not blamed—but in all things approving ourselves the ministers of God in much patience, in affliction, in necessities, in distresses—by pureness, by knowledge, by longsuffering, by kindness, by the Holy Ghost, by love unfeigned—by the word of truth, by the power of God, by the armour of righteousness on the right hand and on the left—to finish our course with joy and honour like those dignified beings who once presided over this church; a Bates, and a Henry—to lay down our charge unstained—like a Newton and a Winter, and leave nothing that requires defence or extenuation; nothing but what is lovely, and of good report—*Brethren, pray for us.* It is necessary if we consider

Fourthly, their *dependence.* This is absolute, and extends to every thing.—It extends to their natural life. The preservation of their health, their strength, their senses, depends upon God.—It extends to their intellectual powers. The continuance and use of their judgment, their memory, their invention, their fancy, depend upon God.—It extends to their spiritual endowments. The continuance and the exercise of their faith, their hope, their love, their courage, their fidelity, their tenderness in the discharge of their office, depend upon God.—It extends to all their devotional duties. The preparation of the heart and the answer of the tongue in man, are from the Lord.—It extends to the success of all their labours. The heart should be the great aim of our preaching; but this is under a Divine disposal. It is said of Lydia, *whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended to the things which were spoken of Paul. Our gospel,* says the apostle to the Thessalonians, *came to you not in word only, but in power and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance.* We readily allow that there was something extraordinary in this case; and we know that miracles have ceased. But God continues to give testimony to the word of his grace; and the effects that attend the dispensation of divine truth require, and demonstrate a divine agency. It is granted, that there is a subjective suitableness in the ministry of the word to do good; as there is in a sword to wound, and in a pen to write. But what is the sword without a hand to wield, or the pen without a hand to guide it? And who is Paul or who is Apollos, but ministers *by* whom ye believed even as the Lord gave to every man? *So then neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase.* A minister without his master is like Gehazi. He may go with the staff, and lay it upon the dead; but there will be no life till Elisha himself comes. To refer to a well known anecdote. When Melancthon was first converted, he thought he should soon convert all his hearers. He supposed that others must see what he saw so clearly, and feel what he felt so powerfully. But his success did not correspond with his expectation; and at length he was compelled to confess, That old Adam was too strong for young Melancthon. And this I presume is one of those truths which we grow in the belief of as we advance in years. And therefore, though I hope we do not study less, we pray more: though we are not less active, we are more dependent. The conviction in time becomes so strong from observation and experience, that we should be completely discouraged in our work, did we not read, that *as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater; so shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it.*

If therefore you wish us to live; to be strong to labour; to be spiritual and useful; to preach as with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven; to turn many to righteousness; to help those much who have believed through grace; and if you would have our addresses effectual to wound and to heal, to sanctify and

establish; and to make ready a people prepared for the Lord—*Brethren, pray for us.* It is necessary, if we consider

Fifthly, their *responsibility. So then*, says the apostle, *every one of us shall give account of himself to God.* You who are the members of this church and congregation, are not to imagine that you have parted for ever with the Sabbaths through which you have passed; the sermons you have heard; the devotional exercises on which you have attended: you will hear of them; you will hear from them again. They are dismissed for the time; but are like men bailed, and bound to appear and prosecute at the assizes.

But we are concerned in the solemnities of that day, as well as you; and in a sense, more than you. Those Sabbaths through which you have passed, we have occupied. Those sermons which you have heard, we have preached. Those devotional exercises on which you have attended, we have conducted; and the prospect resulting from our obligation, is awful. Blessed be God we are not answerable for our success. Though Israel be not gathered, we may be glorious in the eyes of the Lord. *We are unto God, a sweet savour of Christ, in them that are saved and in them that perish. To the one, we are a savour of life unto life; to the other, we are the savour of death unto death.* But there is enough for which we *are* responsible, to make our faces gather paleness, and our knees to smite one against another. *We watch for your souls as they that must give account.* Account of what?—Of these souls; for if we have not given them warning, and they die in their sins, their blood will be required at our hands—Of this watching: when we have watched; how we have watched. How we have watched to gain them. How we have watched to form them. How we have watched to keep them.—Of our fidelity; our zeal; our influence.—Of our conduct; our aims; our motives. Who does not tremble as we proceed?—

> All to the great tribunal haste,
> The account to render there;
> And should'st thou, Lord, but mark our faults,
> Lord, how shall we appear?

Brethren, pray for us.

Thus far we have addressed ourselves to your compassion. But we shall now appeal to a higher principle—your justice. And having examined the propriety of the demand on the ground of necessity, we shall now consider it on the ground of *equity.* It is the

II. part of our subject. Here it will be proper to show—That ministers have claims upon you: and—To inquire in what manner your praying for them will discharge your obligation.

Every fellow-creature has claims upon you.—And you are required to pray *for all men.* Your fellow-christians of every community have claims upon you.—And you are enjoined to make supplication *for all saints.* And have your ministers no claims upon you? Does not the command of God run; *Know them that labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you; and esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake?*—Let me remark three things.

First, their election. Your ministers are *chosen by you.* I pity congregations that have officers forced upon them regardless of their wishes, their taste, their profit. There may be in these cases adaptation and acceptance; but they are accidental; and the very imposition will tend to alienate the mind, and keep the people from considering the minister as their *own.* Your preachers and pastors are the men of your choice. This is the privilege of your churches; and you are not backward to glory in it. But does not this very choice lay you under peculiar obligations? When you voluntarily assume any relation, do you not bind yourselves to the duties pertaining to it; and are you not justly reproached for the infraction of them?

Secondly. Their destiny. These ministers *are appointed for you.* Their very office is founded in a regard to your welfare. They are helpers of your joy. They are to lead you in the way everlasting. They are designed to feed you with knowledge and understanding. They are given *for the perfecting of the saints, and for the edifying of the body of Christ; till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.*

To you they wholly and exclusively belong. For you they give up their time and their talents. For you they read, and study, and pray, and preach. They are not their own even in their comforts, and crosses. Whether they *be afflicted, or comforted, it is for your consolation and salvation.* Why was Jeremiah denied all the pleasures and advantages of social life? Because the circumstances in which he exercised his ministry required the sacrifice. Hence says God, *Thou shalt not take to thee a wife in this place.* And how many are there now, whose situation, and work, and finances, equally demand the exercise of the same self-denial? Ezekiel was blessed with a companion peculiarly dear to him. She laboured under no disease; and might have walked with him for many years as an heir of the grace of life; had not the welfare of the people required the lovely victim to be *offered upon the sacrifice and service of their faith: Son of man*, says Heaven, *behold, I take from thee the desire of thine eyes, with a stroke: and behold at evening my wife died.* And he

was forbidden even to assume the appearance of a mourner, in order to be *a sign to the people!* Upon this principle, all their enjoyments are rendered precarious by you. And to you, as the cause, are to be traced the most painful exercises of their lives. They have been tempted, to know how to succour them that are tempted. They have walked in darkness and have had no light, to know how to speak a word in season to them that are weary. They have struggled with pecuniary difficulties, to be able to sympathize with the poor of the flock, and to aid them to live by faith on the providence of God.

Ministers have talents as well as others; and these abilities, employed in other directions, would place them above dependence; enable them as well as you to provide for their families; and to enjoy the luxury of beneficence. From all this they are excluded. They do not complain of this. They need not. When the chief Shepherd shall appear, they shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away: and having food and raiment, they wish therewith to be content.—But it is for *you*, they relinquish or refuse every temporal emolument, every worldly prospect. And have they no claims upon you? That minister who considers the trifling salary given him, or the few gratuities he receives as a kind of benefaction or alms, is not humble, but mean. He ought to feel that he stands on higher ground than a pauper, or a beneficiary. He is surely nothing less than their servant for Jesus' sake. He earns what he receives. The workman is worthy of his meat: and his support is as much an ordinance, as baptism, or the Lord's supper: even so has the Lord *ordained*, that they that preach the gospel, should live of the gospel. *Let him that is taught in the word communicate unto him that teacheth in all good things.*

Thirdly. Their importance. These ministers are *beneficial to you.*—You think a lawyer has claims upon you for saving your substance. You own the physician has claims upon you for restoring you your health. Nor do we dispute them. But what is the body to the soul? Or time to eternity?—Conscience, do thine office. Speak. "There" says one, "There is the man who met me in my mad career, and was the means of turning my feet into the way of peace." "There," says another, "There is the minister, who, when I was perishing for thirst, angel as he was, opened mine eyes, and showed me a well." "There," says a third, "is the teacher, who, after others had withheld from me the remedy, and I waxed worse and worse, told me of the balm in Gilead, and the physician there, by whose stripes I am healed."—*Thou owest unto me*, says Paul to Philemon, *even thine own self.* And, but for those who are saying this morning, *Brethren, pray for us*, some of you would have been in hell long ago; or if spared, would have been only filling up the measure of your iniquities. To them under God you owe the health that intemperance would have ruined; and the respectability that vice would have destroyed. Which of you can tell into what mistakes and embarrassments you would have fallen, had not they thought of you when you were asleep, or engrossed in your callings; and made their discourses to bear on your danger?

Did you never observe the words of Isaiah —*Though the Lord give you the bread of adversity, and the water of affliction, yet shall not thy teachers be removed into a corner any more, but thine eyes shall see thy teachers: and thine ears shall hear a word behind thee, saying, This is the way, walk ye in it, when ye turn to the right hand, and when ye turn to the left.* And have you not found the preaching of the gospel, a privilege sufficient to counterbalance all that is defective or painful, in your lot? Have you not returned from the house of God freed from your burdens; and reconciled, not only to the duties, but to the trials of life?

And on them you depend for future advantages. To them you look for private admonition and encouragement. To them you look for public counsel and comfort. To them you look to spread your personal and domestic afflictions before God in the sanctuary.—It is not long before your minister will come to you with the message—*Set thine house in order, for thou shalt die, and not live.* He will stand by the side of the bed of languishing and anxiety, and say, in the name of his God and your God, *Leave thy fatherless children, I will preserve them alive and let thy widow trust in me.* With your weeping connexions he will follow your remains to the grave, and deposit them in the house appointed for all living. He will return to the house of mourning, and as it is the end of all men, will teach the living to lay it to heart. In a service sacred to your memory, he will hold up your character for the edification of others, and the glory of God. He will teach your offspring to follow your example, and by a thousand pious wishes and endeavours become the guide of their youth.

We have proved that your ministers have claims upon you. Let us inquire

Secondly. In what way your praying for them will discharge your obligation.

This mode will be the most satisfactory to their own minds. What they principally desire is to live high in your prayerful remembrance. They would rather learn that you entered your closets before you came, than commended their sermons after you returned. If they are spiritual men, this will please them much better than your silver and gold, your applause and caresses.—

Nothing so relieves, nothing so encourages, nothing so animates them in their performances.—Ministers, conscious that they are labouring among a prayerful people, *must* have some feeling and life; *must* preach with some pleasure and hope.

This mode will best promote your attachment to them. If love begets prayer, I am sure prayer begets love. Whatever engages much of our time and attention, will soon become interesting. If we cultivate a tree or a flower, we soon feel a propriety in it. If we take an orphan, and feed, clothe, and educate him, he is sure to be endeared. All the affections are increased by exercise: while negligence breeds indifference and insensibility.—The easiest way to love an enemy is to begin to pray for him. Meeting him at the throne of grace, and under the eye of Him who is kind to the unthankful and the unworthy, we melt, we pity, we pardon, we embrace. If you pray for your ministers, you will think much of them, and at the best time. They will soon possess and retain an importance, and, which is still better, a sacredness in your minds, that will keep your affection from degenerating into servile, or rising into idolatrous. You will never see them without emotion; nor hear them without reverence.

This mode will most strongly enforce the performance of every other duty. Prayer, when viewed aright, always supposes corresponding endeavours. It is mere hypocrisy without a consistent line of conduct. The man that goes to church on the morning of the Sabbath, and when the command for sanctifying God's holy day is read, exclaims, "Lord have mercy upon us, and incline our hearts to keep this law;" when he knows that he left his shop door half open, and some of his domestics selling—insults God to his very face. And is he less mocked, by that father who prays for the conversion of his children, and never trains them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord? Is he less trifled with, by that professor of religion who prays, not to be led into temptation, and then treads the avenues of dissipation? Is he less offended, by that minister who commits himself to God for assistance, and never gives himself to reading and meditation?

Upon the same principle it may be fairly inferred, that there are many people who never pray for their minister. For can they pray for him, and behave improperly towards him? Can they pray for his support, and, according to their ability, refuse to aid him? Can they pray for his reputation, and speak of him lightly before their children and servants? Can they pray for his comfort, and grieve him by their walk, their absence, or their inattention? Can they pray for his preaching, and come to sleep, to criticise, or to cavil?—Out of their own mouths they are condemned. If they really and earnestly prayed for their minister, every other duty they owed him, would follow certainly, and of course.

This mode *will be most productive of their advantage.* In this way you not only may, but must be useful to your ministers. Does not God hear prayer? Has not he appointed it? Here is the promise: *Ask, and it shall be given you: seek, and ye shall find: knock, and it shall be opened unto you.* Here is the experience of his people in every age to exemplify and confirm the promise. He *never said to the seed of Jacob, seek ye me in vain. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.* Neither is the efficacy of it hindered by infirmity; *Elias was a man subject to like passions as we are, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain; and it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months. And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth brought forth her fruit.*

Finally. This mode *is the most accessible.* This way in which you can serve your ministers, does not depend upon talents, office, condition. A man, poor in this world, may be rich in faith: and he that is overlooked even by his neighbours on earth, may have great interest at the court of heaven. Outward distinctions are here nothing. He who possesses most of the spirit of prayer, has most power with God, whether he dwells in a palace, or sighs in a workhouse.

Some of you, perhaps, have no other way of showing to your minister the regard you wish to pay. You have no mansion, and cannot invite him to a well-spread table. You have no substance, and cannot furnish his shelf with the useful volume, or enable him as he enters the hovel of indigence and pain, to accompany his devotion with relief. Compassionate hearts! Be not discouraged. *Where there is first a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not.* But you may do him good; great good; unspeakable good. You have a resource, a mighty resource in prayer; and how should you rejoice in it, and employ it. You have a friend ever near you who is almighty; *he will regard the prayer of the destitute, and will not despise their prayer.* He can do for this young minister exceeding abundantly, above all you ask or think. He can give him the zeal of a Whitefield; the knowledge of an Owen; the seriousness of a Baxter; the spirituality of a Leighton; the simplicity and unction of a Henry; the diligence and amiableness of a Doddridge. Greatly acceptable, and every way promising as he now is, no bounds can be fixed to his improvement or usefulness, *you also striving together in prayer to God for him.*

There is always a delicacy in describing duties of which we are not only the recommenders, but the objects. I felt it in the prospect of this exercise. Indeed it is almost impossible to engage in a service like this, without seeming to exalt ourselves, or to magnify our office.

But if any statement of the subject can secure us from the imputation, it is the view of it we have been taking. You will bear us witness that we have not been calling for an increase of salary, exacting double honour, or assuming pompous names and titles. We have not appeared before you as dignitaries, but as petitioners. *Brethren, pray for us.* This is all we desire. Think of our wants. Remember our work, our trials, our danger, our dependence, and our responsibility. Candidly weigh the claims which we have upon you. Remember we are the men of your choice; we are devoted to your service; and you derive important and numberless benefits from our labours. Discharge your obligation by prayer. Remember it is a method the most satisfactory to our minds; it will best promote your attachment to us; it will most strongly influence the performance of every other duty; it will be the most productive of advantage; it is within the reach of all.

In this way prove and cherish your regard. In your social exercises; around your family altars; and when alone bear us upon your minds. This is all the return we implore for our services and sacrifices. According to our power we are mindful of you. The study, as well as the pulpit is witness, and God is witness that we remember you collectively, and spread your cases individually before the throne of grace and mercy. And we have you in our hearts, both to live and to die with you. *O! ye* who constitute the people of our charge, *our mouth is open unto you, our heart is enlarged; now, for a recompense in the same, be ye also enlarged.*

BRETHREN, PRAY FOR US.

I have been called peculiarly to address the members of *this* church. Here are some who are members of *no* church. I have been addressing those whose duty it is to pray for their ministers.—Here are some—perhaps many! who never pray for *themselves.* I may seem to go out of my way to besoeak the attention of such; but who would not go out of his way to attempt to save a soul from death, and to hide a multitude of sins?

When my dear and honoured friend and tutor, the Rev. Cornelius Winter, was ordained, two persons, even profligate before, were converted, who lived holy, and died happy in the Lord. It seemed a divine encouragement; and his gentle spirit viewed it as a token for good. What a satisfaction would it be to the kindred mind of this young divine, on whose head we have been imploring so many blessings! what a time to be remembered would this morning prove, if before the service ends, joy in heaven begins, *over one sinner that repenteth!*

——So then it is a truth, that some of you, though you are found in his presence this morning, live without God in the world! You go forth and return; and God is not in all your thoughts! You lie down and rise up; but restrain prayer before God! This duty you neglect! This privilege you despise! The Redeemer suffered, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us unto God; but you are resolved to die eternally rather than approach him by that new and living way which he has consecrated for you! He cries—*Turn you at my reproof: behold I will pour out my spirit unto you; I will make known my words unto you.* But you set at nought all his counsel! You despise all his reproof!—You may obtain temporal good things without prayer, but they will prove your curse: and while you congratulate yourselves on the fine pasture into which you are turned, you are fattening for the day of slaughter. *The prosperity of fools shall destroy them.* And as to spiritual blessings—those blessings which pertain to the soul and eternity; those blessings, one of which—if you were truly wise, you would desire above the whole world; these—such is the inviolable order of Heaven—these can never be obtained without prayer.—*For all these things I will be inquired of by the house of Israel to do it for them.*

Do not therefore imagine that your end will differ from your course. If you live without prayer, you will die without hope; and your history, through endless ages, like Ezekiel's roll, will be read *lamentation, and mourning, and wo.*

CONSOLATION IN DEATH:

A SERMON,

OCCASIONED BY

THE DEATH OF MRS. ELIZA BERRY,

WIFE OF THE REV. JOSEPH BERRY;

AND PREACHED IN THE COMMON-CLOSE MEETING, WARMINSTER, MARCH 1, 1812.

BY WILLIAM JAY.

Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.—Psalm xxiii. 4.

COMPARISON is a method of instruction the most easy, pleasing, and impressive. Hence it has been adopted in all ages, and in all countries. The sacred writers peculiarly abound with it. They always express spiritual subjects by natural ideas; and hold forth things unseen and eternal, by means of those which are seen and temporal.

To aid our acquaintance and communion with God, he has condescended to reveal himself under every relation and office that can awaken our attention, and encourage our hope.—Thus he calls himself the SHEPHERD of his people; and the psalm before us, is a beautiful commentary on the character.—Happy the man who can say, *The Lord is my shepherd: I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters*—Here David views himself as in a state of prosperity, peace, and pleasure, enjoying every advantage the most favoured situation could afford.—But to rejoice in such indulgences had nothing remarkable in it. He was a man of too much reflection, to conclude that a scene so gratifying would continue always, or continue long. He knew the instability of every thing human. He knew that he was liable to wander, and would often need restoring grace—*He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake.* He knew that he was mortal, and looked forward to a dying hour—at once foreboding the worst, and exulting in it. *Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.*

It will be necessary to consider three things:—

I. A *condition* supposed—*Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death.*

II. A *confidence* of mind in the contemplation of it—*I will fear no evil.*

III. The *foundation* of the fortitude—*for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.*

I should always have deemed these words worthy of your attention, but they have this morning been chosen for me; and will in future be additionally endeared to many in this assembly, as containing the experience and the desire of our dear and invaluable friend, Mrs. BERRY. But before I bring her character more prominently forward; and in order to bring it forward to advantage, I shall attempt to illustrate, as briefly as I am able, the doctrine of our text, according to the arrangement proposed.

FIRST, then, David speaks of a passage, deep as a valley, dark as a shadow, and dreadful as death. It means—a state of affliction—of danger—of terror. It means the approach, and the state of dissolution—it means the passage that unites this world and the world to come: *yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death.* This is the condition he supposes: and the supposition is—

First, natural. The reason is, because the event itself is unavoidable. We can think of many journies which we may never accomplish: but we must all travel this dreary road: it is *the way of all the earth.* By the reduction of the term of human life, a century now sweeps the globe, and dispossesses of its inhabitants every cottage, every mansion, every palace, every temple. By the universality of the appointment, the world is delivered from those who only seem made to use fans and looking-glasses, from the foolish and the vain, from the wicked and the vile, from the troublesome and the mischievous, from the plagues and curses of the community—but then it also takes away the wise as well as the ignorant, the good as well as the evil, the useful as well as the injurious; private and public benefactors; those who have turned many to righteousness, those who have saved states, those who have adorned families—and often, according to the estimations of reason, those are removed first, who can least be spared. The supposition is,

Secondly, useful. Death is not only an inevitable, but a momentous event; and it is well to realize it. The thought of it is indeed irksome to the man of the world, who has his portion in this life, and possesses no hope of a better; he therefore always endeavours to keep it, or to banish it from his mind. And, if your putting the evil day far off, was putting it away, the practice might be justified. But the destroyer of the Gentiles is not even to be diverted; and during every moment of your forgetfulness, it is approaching you. And what if coming suddenly it finds you sleeping? A Christian should never be surprised in death: neither should he leave things unarranged and unexecuted, which will throw him into tumult, and induce him, when the summons arrives, to pray for protection; *O spare me, that I may recover strength, before I go hence, and be no more.* Familiar "thoughts," says Young, "will slope the way to death:" so that when you come to the end of your travels, you will find, not a precipice, but a gradual descent.—There are some cases in which the anticipation of death will be found *peculiarly* proper. For instance. It is peculiarly proper when a fondness for the world creeps upon us. David often refers to the subject of mortality in the Psalms, and applies it commonly as a cure for the pride of life, for man is prone to walk in a vain show. But, says he, how humbling is the reflection? Do they trust in their *wealth, and boast themselves of the multitude of their riches? None of them can by any means redeem his brother; nor give to God a ransom for him that he should still live for ever and not see corruption.* Is he *in honour? He abideth not; he is like the beasts that perish.* Is he *a prince? His breath goeth forth; he returneth to his dust—in that very day his thoughts perish.* It is peculiarly proper, when sickness invades our frame. For what is every bodily indisposition and infirmity, but, according to its degree, a gentler or a louder knock at the heart, saying, *Behold the judge standeth before the door.* In this state Job was, and reckoning on the tendency of his disease said, *I know thou wilt bring me to death, and to the house appointed for all living.* It is peculiarly proper, when *the almond-tree flourishes, and the grasshopper is a burden, and desire fails, and man is going to his long home*, pressed down by the weight of years, and ordered to contemplate the grave, whither he is *hastening.*—And O! how peculiarly proper is it when we see our neighbours, friends, and relatives withdrawing, and we follow them with weeping eyes. When we are committing to the dust the remains of our dear connexions; should not a solemn awe come over our minds? Does not their mortality remind us of our own? Can we help retiring, and saying, "Ah! soon—in a scene like this, I shall be the principal figure. All these sad ceremonies will be performed for me. And while my body returns to the dust as it was, my spirit will return to God who gave it."———

Thirdly, the supposition is modified. Let us observe what David says of the prospect.

—He calls it the valley of the *shadow* of death. Can the shadow of a sword wound? Can the shadow of a lion kill?—Jesus endured the reality; for he bore our sins in his body on the tree. It is not therefore without reason that the apostle so frequently varies his expression, when speaking of Christ, and of Christians. He *died* for us, that whether we wake or *sleep*, we should live together with him. If we believe that Jesus *died* and rose again, even so them also that *sleep* in Jesus, shall God bring with him. Hence our Saviour said to his hearers, *If a man keep my saying, he shall never see death.*—What? Do not his disciples die as well as others? No. *There is one event to the righteous and to the wicked;* but it comes so changed, so softened, so blessed to the believer, that it does not deserve the name—call it a removal, a departure, a sleep—call it any thing but what would so misrepresent it—death. *He hath abolished death, and brought life and immortality to light by the gospel.*

David speaks of *walking* through this valley. Some are forced through. The wicked, says Solomon, are *driven* away in their wickedness. He shall be *driven*, says Bildad, from light into darkness, and *chased* out of the world. Some are carried. These are the deluded, who presume that all is well, while all is ruin: who have no bands in their death, and whose strength is firm: who die like lambs, and become the prey of the devil

and his angels. But the believer *walks* through. He is not compelled; and he is not merely passive. He has something to do there: he has graces to exercise, and duties to perform there: and having honoured God by the life he has led, he is also concerned to glorify him by the death he shall die.

David speaks of walking *through* the valley of the shadow of death. He does not wander there; does not remain there; is not lost there. We soon lose sight of the passengers. We cannot see their egress on the other side—but we know that when absent from the body they are present with the Lord. The cessation of their breath is the signal of their escape: and as soon as we discern it, we exclaim—"They are happily over. They have reached the borders of Immanuel's land. They are singing as they look backward and forward. *We went through fire and through water, but thou hast brought us out into a wealthy place.*"

SECONDLY. Here is a confidence of mind in the contemplation of this condition: yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, *I will fear no evil.*

This confidence is not *easily attained.* We have asked the question; Can the *shadow* of a sword wound? Can the *shadow* of a lion kill?—And we readily answer; no. But the shadow implies the substance. The sword, the lion whose shadow we stand in, cannot be far off. This makes it trying. There is a reality somewhere: and some are exposed to it. And can we help asking with a shudder—Who are they? The very language of David supposes that there is much naturally in death to excite fear. And the wonder is, not that any should be afraid, but that any should be without fear. Even many of those who effect to be free from it, are only imposing upon others, and deceiving themselves. It is called the king of terrors. It is an untried state. No one has returned to tell us what it is. We must go through it alone. If others at the same time are passing it—and how many are passing every moment!—we cannot see each other.—Death breaks off all the busy and fond purposes of the heart. It deprives us of all our temporal possessions and enjoyments. It breaks up the tender connexions of life. It separates between those intimate companions, the body and the soul.—The forerunners of death are often dreadful, the sinking eye, the trembling limbs, the convulsions of pain, the mortal dew—

> The pains, the groans, the dying strife
> Fright our approaching souls away;
> Still we shrink back again to life,
> Fond of our prison and our clay.

When dead, we become so offensive that our dearest friends bury us out of their sight: and we say to corruption, thou art my father; and to the worm thou art my mother and my sister. When we reflect on all this; what wonder, if *we groan being burdened, not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life.* In addition to all this we must observe, that death leaves one relation untouched, the relation of a creature to his Creator, of a subject to his sovereign, of a criminal to his judge: it translates us from a temporal to an eternal mode of being, from a state of action to a state of retribution—for *after death the judgment! And* who is not a sinner? Who has nothing to fear?

We would remark also, that this confidence is possessed by the subjects of divine grace in *very unequal degrees.* There is often a great difference in the constitutional firmness of men. One person shall tremble at the shaking of a leaf, while another does not shrink back at the prospect of any danger. Some have clear views of the Christian's safety and privileges; the apprehensions of others, even with regard to the leading truths of the gospel, are defective and obscure. Some have hardly faith enough to entitle them to the name of believers; others are strong in faith; rich in faith. Hence some are *all their life time subject to bondage through fear of death,* while others go on their way rejoicing in the Lord always; and saying, *The Lord is my light and my salvation, whom shall I fear? The Lord is the strength of my life, of whom shall I be afraid?*—And thus when the last hour arrives; some meet death with rapturous pleasure; some with tranquillity; while in some, doubts and hopes alternately prevail.

Yet we would further observe, that this confidence *generally increases as the people of God approach death.* Hence Isaiah compares their peace to a river: for as a river rolls deeper and broader as it hastens to the sea, so their peace commonly becomes more solid and more extensive as they draw near eternity. In this view, the change which Doctor Goodwin experienced was remarkable. "Is this dying?" exclaimed he, a little before he expired: "Is this what for so many years I have been dreading? O, how precious does the righteousness of the Saviour now appear!—He cannot love me better than he does; and, I think, I cannot love him better than I do." This is not a solitary instance. How many have we seen ourselves who wept upon the mountains of Zion, but rejoiced in the valley of the shadow of death; whose harps, long before hung upon the willows, were taken down, and delightfully used in singing the Lord's song, in the most strange part of all the strange land.—We cannot always account for things as effects, which yet we are compelled by observation and testimony to admit as facts. But the case before us sufficiently explains itself. The love of life, having from the will of God no

longer now any purposes to answer, is suffered to die away. By drawing near the better country, we feel something of its influence, as the perfumes of Arabia, the happy, are blown into the neighbouring provinces. Above all, there is now more of the simplicity of faith. During life, some degree of legality attaches to all our performances. Doing continually intermingles with believing: and often insensibly to ourselves we are anxious to make ourselves better, to *entitle* us to the Divine favour, or to find something in ourselves wherein to hope, if not, whereof to glory before God. But all this is now over. What can he *now* do? What qualifications can he *now* acquire?—What attainments can he *now* propose? "Let him look back upon a well-spent life." This is impossible. Every review he takes of himself, is humbling. The very sins of his holy things would drive him to despair. One resource remains, one, only—one, which is always equal to our relief—one, whose consolation is only hindered from flowing into us by the want of *simplicity* of mind—it is looking by faith to the Lamb of God who taketh away the sin of the world; it is to commit implicitly a lost soul to him—

A guilty, weak, and helpless worm,
On thy kind arm I fall;
Be thou my strength and righteousness,
My Jesus, and my all.

Finally. This confidence is *enlightened and wise.* David's fearlessness was not apathy. He was a man of fine feelings. His imagination was lively. He was a lover of poetry and music. No man ever more bewailed his unworthiness and vileness; or was at times nearer despair.—Neither did ignorance raise him above the fear of death. His courage was not the boldness of a man who shuts his eyes, and can see no danger. The peace of many people will not bear reflection. It would die before thought, and therefore its aim is to elude it. But whatever some may imagine, the religion of a Christian is not a mass of blind feelings. Ignorance is not the mother of *his* devotion. *His* privileges are not pictures of fancy. *His* joy is not the ferment of enthusiasm. *His* confidence results from just views of things: therefore it is said, *they that know thy name will put their trust in thee. He* is able to *give to every man that asketh him, a reason of the hope that is in him.* Yes, he has *reason* to say—though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, *I will fear no evil*—for there is no evil in it.—Yea, it has not only lost the power of injuring him, but obtained the power of doing him good. It is not only a conquered foe, but a most munificent benefactor. Hence Doctor George often said he had two special friends in the world, Christ and Death: "Christ," said he, "is my first friend, but Death is my second." And the apostle tells us, that *to die is gain.* Now the heir of immortality comes of age, and gains his inheritance. Now the tempest-beaten mariner gains the desired haven. Now the often wounded soldier gains his victory and triumph. Now the Christian, after all his struggles with darkness, sin, and sorrow, gains admission to a state of perfect light, and purity, and joy. His gain is everlasting and infinite; and therefore inexpressible and inconceivable: as it is written, *eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.* But we go one step further; and say, that death is not only to the believer productive of advantage in the issue, but also admits of satisfaction and pleasure in the passage. And this has brought us to the

Third division of our subject, and which leads us to observe the *foundation* of this fortitude: *For thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff, they comfort me.* Let us consider the reasons themselves, and the certainty of David's mind respecting them.

The reasons are two.

First. The Divine presence: *For thou art with me.* He is every where by the immensity of his nature; but he is peculiarly with his people: *he is nigh unto all them that call upon him, to all that call upon him in truth: he will fulfil the desire of them that fear him, he also will hear their cry and will save them.*—He is with his people in *every* state, he *never* leaves them, nor forsakes them; but he is peculiarly with them in *trouble*—and he is most peculiarly with them in *this trouble.* In none do they need it so much; for if he is not with us there, we must be alone; every other connexion then leaves us: if he is not with us there, we must sink; for every earthly dependence on which we have leaned, then fails us. And, if in other cases the child of God cries with Moses, *If thy presence go not with us, take us not up from hence*—With what awful anxiety will he ask after this conductor, when he comes to the entrance of this dark valley, and looks in.—In this position, the sweet singer in our British Israel represents the believer, and puts this language into his trembling lips—

O, if my Lord would come and meet,
My soul shall stretch her wings in haste;
Fly fearless through death's iron gate,
Nor feel the terror as she pass'd.

Well, he indulges this unavoidable wish. He not only comes to the *other* side to receive us to himself, that where he is there we may be also; but he comes to *this* side—and accompanies us—all through he is with us.

The second is the Divine attention: *Thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.* It would be trifling to give each of these terms a separate import. By an allowance, common in

all language, but especially in poetry, two words are used for the same thing. This thing means the pastoral crook: and the pastoral crook means the pastoral care. This adds therefore to the former assurance. God will not only be with us, but as a shepherd—as a good shepherd, exercising the care we need in this unfriendly condition—and exercising it in such a way, as not only to guide and guard us, but to provide for us where there seemed to be no possibility of pasture to feed us—yea, to *comfort us*—Thy rod and thy staff, *they comfort me.* It reminds us of the language of God concerning his church, in the second chapter of Hosea, and the fourteenth and fifteenth verses. *I will allure her and bring her into the wilderness*—and *there* she will surely be dreary and alone: *there* she must surely be destitute; she cannot look after any thing like a garden in a desert; there she will only nourish despair; or sigh in anguish: nay *I will speak comfortably unto her: and I will give her her vineyards—from thence; and the valley of Achor—for a door of hope; and she shall sing—there, as in the days of her youth, and as in the day when she came up out of the land of Egypt.* Paul speaks of *strong consolation:* and it must be strong indeed, when affliction, however depressing, cannot subdue it, or death itself destroy or diminish it.

But could David reckon upon this? He could. He had no uncertainty of mind respecting either the presence or the care of his heavenly Shepherd. But whence did he derive this assurance, that enabled him to say, even in reference to the valley of the shadow of death, *Thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff, they comfort me?*

It was derived first from the word of God, which cannot be broken, in which he has revealed his designs concerning us, and bound himself by the most solemn engagements, all in unison with this promise; *Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God, I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness.*

And, secondly, from his own experience. How often does he remember the years of the right hand of the Most High. How often does he remark what God hath done for his soul. How encouragingly and confidently does he reason from the past to the future; from what God had been to what he would be; concluding that he remained the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever; would perfect that which concerned him, and forsake not the work of his own hands. *What time I am afraid, I will trust in thee. Because thou hast been my help, therefore under the shadow of thy wings will I rejoice. From the end of the earth will I cry unto thee, when my heart is overwhelmed: lead me to the rock that is higher than I. For thou hast been a shelter for me, and a strong tower from the enemy. I will abide in thy tabernacle for ever: I will trust in the covert of thy wings.*—Such is the ground of the believer's hope; and *it maketh not ashamed.*

—But I forbear enlargement, in order to meet the eager expectation of this crowded assembly, in noticing the event that has brought me hither this morning—an event which will afford us a better exemplification of our subject, than any your preacher has been able to afford; and which cannot fail to strengthen our conviction that we are *not following cunningly devised fables.*

I am not fond of funeral eulogies; and in the case before us, an attempt at panegyric is unnecessary, if not improper, as the deceased is already so well known, and so highly esteemed among you; and her character, like a beautiful form, would be injured, rather than benefited, by finery and paint. But from justice to my own observation, and to the competent and harmonious testimony of numbers who had better opportunities of remark, I feel myself compelled to say, that I consider Mrs. Berry, not only as one of the excellent of the earth, but one of the most excellent—one of the most amiable, consistent, exemplary, edifying Christians, in every relation and office she was called to fill, that any of our churches could ever boast.

I never think it of much importance to inquire *how* persons became religious, if it appears that they are actually in the possession, and under the influence of it. The work must be of God, and the grand thing to ascertain is the reality of it by its effects. In many very eminent Christians, the operation is very gradual, and attended with none of those remarkable circumstances which would form a narrative. The event that was chiefly instrumental, in the conversion of our departed friend, was the conversation of her very amiable and worthy brother-in-law. It is observable, that this friend to religion, at the same time, and in the same way, was rendered useful to her sister, who, after walking as an heir of the grace of life, died happy in the Lord Jesus. I mention this to excite and encourage religious conversation; and to enforce the words of Solomon—*In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thine hand: for thou knowest not whether shall prosper, either this or that, or whether they both shall be alike good.*

The religion of Mrs. Berry was not only real, but peculiar and distinguishing; and there are several circumstances in her conduct, and several attributes in her character which I wish to notice, as largely as the limits of our time will permit.

Piety is not always combined with gentility, and talent. But Mrs. Berry was descended from a family of respectability, and had been favoured with the advantage of a good

education. She possessed all the elegant accomplishments, and was company for any class of society. She had no ordinary share of mental discrimination and taste. Her remarks on books, and preachers, and characters, were always judicious, though never obtruded on others, or blended with ill nature and censoriousness. Her judgment concerning religion itself, may be in a measure inferred from a single observation. Having some time ago, finished a course of reading, part of which included Mrs. Rowe's Devotional Exercises, William's Diary, Garie's and Pearce's Memoirs, the Lives of Miss Anthony and Mrs. Bennet, and Brainerd, she said to her husband, "I think if a young person was to ask me where religion might be seen apart from the Bible, I would put into his hands the lives of her subjects. The lives of saints, indiscriminately, would not do, even supposing they could all be written. Nor would all those answer the purpose, whose characters might be *irreproachable*. Religion herself is amiable, and inviting. Attraction is her grand character. I would not put into such hands Mrs. Rowe's Exercises. Her religion is too much passion: she soars, and she flies, and is lost in her feelings. Brainerd was a holy man, and we cannot but revere his memory: still, in all his religion there appeared that melancholy tinge which was constitutional. Pearce was an amiable Christian; and so was Garie. But I think I should give first of all William's Diary. There I see a combination of grace and intellect. There is the whole scene displayed. There you have not the effervescence of religion only but the Christian warfare. You witness all his infirmities, and you see in what way they were brought into subjection. You witness the tendency of his religion, and see him habitually rising towards God; but you see him also sobered by sense, and struggling with sorrow." When her husband asked, "But how does this accord with my Eliza's opinion, that the grand character of religion is attraction?" With an eye full of expression she promptly replied: "Is not the attraction of truth, its unreservedness; its honesty?" Her opinion of authors was evinced in the selection which adorned her little separate study. Through a great part of the winter of 1810, she was an evening prisoner in her own house, and as, at that time her children were too young, even for maternal address, her time was principally spent in reading—especially in reading her Bible. Hence were derived her instructions, her reproofs, her hopes, and her joys. This book gratified her intellectual as well as her religious taste. How often at this season would she come down from her closet, and embracing her husband, say, "Joseph, the Bible is my all. Its matter and its manner suit me. Its subject is good, and the treatment, if possible, makes it better. Modern ministers attend too much to style and phraseology; the old writers, often attended to matter at the expense of language—my Bible regards both. I do not shut this book and say, O how tedious! or, O how superficial! It is *all* I want, and *as* I want it."

The religion of this saint was not *occasional;* it did not depend upon particular seasons, and exercises, and occurrences. She was in the fear of the Lord all the day long: and acknowledged him in all her ways. No one loved the habitation of God's house more than she did, but her devotion was not confined to it. It was not roving and hearing-religion. It appeared in public, but it lived in private—it was closet and family-religion. It was not a thing separable from her, and which was sometimes assumed and sometimes laid aside; but it was a principle wrought into all her feelings, habits, and actions. Let me adduce a partial, but interesting illustration. After the month of November, 1811, she scarcely ever went out. Her Sabbath-day evenings were employed in reading the Scriptures, and holding familiar dialogues with her three babes. After hearing them repeat a short prayer, and one of Watts's little hymns for children, she seated them each in a separate chair, while with maternal simplicity and endearment, she heard and answered *their* questions, and proposed *her own*. Dismissing the two youngest to rest, the eldest (being now six years old) was retained up a little longer. With him, her constant Sabbath-day evening custom was to kneel and pray. At these periods she forgot herself in endeavouring to interest her boy. She would begin with prayer for his father, who at that precise period was preaching; then she would pray for her children, one by one. After mentioning their names, she either implored forgiveness for foibles, or expressed her gratitude that "the great God had made them such good children." Taking this boy one day into the parlour where she usually performed these exercises, his father asked him if his dear mother did not sometimes kneel with him and pray; with eyes instantly filled with tears, the little disciple artlessly replied, "Yes, father, mother used to kneel at *that chair*, and hold my hand, and pray for father that he may do good, and for me, and Henry, and for little Mary, and for all of us."—O, ye mothers, sanctify your tenderness and your influence. How much depends upon your gentle and early endeavours? How often may you sow the seed which after a lapse of time shall revive and flourish, thirty, sixty, and a hundred fold! How often has a disobedient son been reclaimed, by the remembrance of the eloquent tears of her who bore him, or the pressure of her trembling hand when delivering her dying charge! What did Mr. Cecil and Mr. Newton owe to the lessons their mothers taught them! What did Timo-

thy owe to his grandmother, Lois, and his mother, Eunice? What did Samuel owe to Hannah? We know little of Jesse, but how often and tenderly does David in his devotions refer to his mother, and plead the relation in which he had the honour and happiness of standing to her—"Save the son of *thine handmaid.*" "Truly I am thy servant, and the son of *thine handmaid.*"—"I think," said this deceased mother, about a fortnight before her death, "I think, in looking back on all these seasons, my sweetest exercises were with my dear boy on the Sabbath evenings:—The house was still: my babes were in bed: my husband was labouring for God in the sanctuary: every thing aided and inspired devotion. I think my dear boy will never forget some of these seasons, any more than myself. O, my happy seasons with my infant son." Similar to this was her attention to the religious welfare, as well as domestic comfort of her servants. She would often converse with them on the concerns of their souls, and administer reproof with mildness, or encouragement with tenderness, as their state required. The servant living with her at the time of her death, remarked with tears "That she little thought when she entered the family, that her master would have proved her spiritual father, and her dear mistress her spiritual nurse." But so it was. On the Sabbath-day evening, it was common before prayer, for the master to repeat the outlines of one of the sermons that day delivered, the mistress that of another, and the servant that of the third. Thus there was friendship to soften authority, and to sweeten subjection: while it insured subordination, it made them forgetful of dominion or dependence: it was a family of love.

Her *humility* was one of her distinguishing qualities. She was clothed with it. She had no religious ostentation about her. She was like the sun which is unavoidably and only seen in doing good: or the violet that is betrayed in its concealed retreat by its fragrance. She did not, like many, talk of her spiritual attainments, or say much of her experience. Neither was she always in company uttering expressions of her unworthiness and vileness—this she *felt*, and the sense of it *influenced* her; but as Mrs. More observes, humility consists not in telling her faults, but in being willing to be told them; and judging by this standard, it is to be feared the lowly complaints of many professors against themselves, will be found to be, not only *less* than nothing, but *worse* than nothing. The deeper the river, the more noiseless it rolls by; it is the shallow rivulet that breaks, and bubbles, and deadens your ears with its sound.—Her intimate friends knew much that her common acquaintances never knew: her husband knew much that her intimate friends never knew: her God knew much that her husband never knew—her *life was hid with Christ in God.*

Let me remark another feature equally obvious in our deceased friend; I mean her *kindness.* This was a perpetual stream flowing from the fountain of a warm heart—

> "Ne'er roughen'd by those cataracts and breaks,
> Which humour interposed too often makes."

She was free from

> "Temper flaws unseemly."

She had *the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price.* She listened to no backbiter. She spake evil of no man. Upon *her tongue was the law of kindness.* In doing good she was in her element; and she not only seized, but sought opportunities to be useful. She loved the poor. She often visited them. She promoted no less than three charitable institutions in her own neighbourhood, and was secretary to them all.

Her *prudence* was pre-eminent. It appeared in all her conduct. She seemed intuitively to perceive all the proprieties of action, in whatever combination of circumstances she was placed. But this quality is to be chiefly noticed in her as the wife of a minister. This I have always considered as one of the most difficult spheres for a female to fill up properly; but she filled it up without *censure* and without *envy.* She had no heralds to carry and bring news respecting households and individuals. She had no *familiars* into whose possession she completely put herself, and who were privy to all her opinions; and though she had her select friends, they were chosen after slow and judicious observation; and in all her intercourse even with them, remembering her peculiar relation, she maintained a degree of dignified reserve. Often when sounded respecting the characters or actions of others, she would reply with a sweet smile in her face; "You forget that I am a minister's wife; she may tell her husband what she thinks and hears, but she must only tell his flock what is calculated to promote their peace." She never embroiled her husband in ecclesiastical contests; never urged him to look abroad after a more popular sphere; never stimulated him to exact more prerogative; never made him discontented by intimations that the respect shown him was not equal to his claims. More than once, when he received an invitation to labour for a while in a much larger congregation, she has said, "My Joseph, let me beseech you to decline it. Many of our young ministers seem too eager to catch at popularity, and to rove abroad. Let us be satisfied with the condition in which the Lord has fixed us. His eye is always upon us, and he regards not the splendour of the station, but the manner in which we discharge the duties arising

from it." Though exceedingly attached to his company, she was not so selfish as to wish to detain him from his studies; or his official work. She would often gently call him from his books, and remind him, that a minister was not only to read and make sermons, but to visit the fatherless and the widow in their affliction, and to speak a word in season to them that are weary.

Her attention to *order and regularity* was singular. Life with her was a system, and every thing in it had its due time and importance. Hence she knew nothing of that hurry and fretfulness occasioned by omission and confusion. In her last illness she looked forward and arranged every thing however minute. On giving up her books, as secretary, a few weeks before she died, her countenance was a true index of her mind; but when the different ladies, (as temporary treasurers till an extraordinary meeting could be called) were gone, she exclaimed, "Blessed be my God for this. I should not have liked my husband or my children to have been reproached with unprincipled or inaccurate accounts; above all, I should have been sorry if the cause of my Jesus has suffered. Religion is with me a sacred cause, and concern for its honour in every thing, little or great, a sacred duty.—Indeed there is nothing about religion little, because it *all* regards God." She examined all her papers, destroying those she did not wish to have preserved, and neatly folding up all the rest. An inventory of all the household furniture, and of all the children's apparel was written by her, and given to her husband—so that in a moment he could find every thing he wished. She had cut with her own hand, and laid by in the same order in which it was to be used, work for her dear little girl to sew for twelve months to come. No circumstance connected with her funeral had she overlooked. And one thing in particular, as very characteristical of the self-possession which enabled her to provide for every case that could result from her condition, I cannot forbear to mention. It was intended that she should have been buried in the vault under the communion table. At the last administration of the Lord's supper, her husband, struck with the thought, that when performing the next service of this kind, his beloved wife would be lying beneath his feet, was too much affected to proceed. She accidentally heard of this; and without consulting or informing him, she sent for some of the gentlemen belonging to the church, and expressed to them her dying wish, that she might be buried under the front gallery! Her wish was gratified.

But how am I going on. Much I have remarked already, and yet I have much more which I wish to notice if your time would allow. Will you, my Christian friends, excuse me, if I protract the service a little beyond the usual limits? We are not assembled on an ordinary occasion—I hope we are come hither to learn to die.

And O! what a death was here! Few, even among the subjects of divine grace, have ever been so favoured in their last illness and their last moments. Those friends who had the best opportunity of observing, and on whose judgment, as well as piety we can rely, have uniformly acknowledged, that they never witnessed a scene so blessed, so glorious. Her afflicted chamber was none other than the house of God, and the very gate of heaven. Here was doctor Watts's strong language realized—

> And lose my life among the charms
> Of so divine a death.

What shall I bring forward? Her serenity of mind! It was more than serenity; it was joy unspeakable, and full of glory.

Some representations and expressions must not die with her. We will follow the order of time in stating them.

From the end of December, till beyond the middle of January, she scarcely ever composed herself to sleep, without repeating again and again the little song said to be composed by an Indian; the second verse of which she after rehearsed with a kind of transport—

> "A few more rising suns at most
> Will land me safe on Canaan's coast."

On the 30th of January, her husband returned from the funeral of a relative, which he had been called to attend at a distance from home. A friend was then sitting in the room with her, but as soon as she had withdrawn, this beloved bride hung round the neck of her husband, and said, "My Joseph, my dearest Joseph, the time is very near that we must part. I have no cause for sorrow at the thought; but I know you will sorrow: but do not sorrow over much. My God is your God, and will be so to the end. He will also be the God of my dear children. Endeavour to make up your mind to the stroke, and be assured it is his doing who doth all things well. My tears are flowing fast, and yours are flowing fast, but they are all dropping into our Redeemer's bosom. He knows our circumstances, and we must live upon that sure promise; *as thy day thy strength shall be!*" On his replying, "Why, my dearest creature, do you think thus?" she rejoined, "I know that I am going home, and that heaven is my home; yes, my dearest home, from the inexpressible enjoyment I have had. I have lain on that bed, and had more joy than a mere mortal could hold; such joy would not do for creatures—it would be more than they could sustain. The twenty-third psalm was a heavenly message to me, and with calmness and the certain prospect

of soon entering the valley, I could say, *I will fear no evil*—no, not even there—for *thou art with me, thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.* I tried to sing this and much more in the night, but I had no voice; and therefore I sung it only in spirit." Having exhausted herself with her tears and her discourse, she dropped asleep; but presently after awaking, and feeling her weakness, she said, "My flesh and my heart fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion for ever."

February 2d. While two friends were sitting by her bed-side, she expatiated most sweetly on the glories of heaven, and her assured hope of going there. As one of them left the room, her little girl entered it, and when the babe showed herself at the corner of her curtain, she observed, "There, I thought I never should have been able to give up that child; but now I can do even this, and do it without the least anxiety. It is my Father's will we should separate; his will is mine: and cannot I leave her with him?"

February 4th. Her husband in the evening announced her medical friend was come. She was, at that instant, sitting up in bed and reading her Bible; as he entered the room she shut it, but after his departure said, "I thought to avoid ostentation by putting my Bible away, but it struck me, why should I do it? Precious book! thou art all my consolation and support. If the gay and the worldly are not ashamed of their cards, would it have been right for me to have been ashamed of thee? Surely not. But lest it should appear like Pharisaic righteousness, I shut it and talked to Mr. —— about my feelings and my prospects."—Pausing a little for breath, she added—My present experience is truly blessed. The clouds in the air pass swiftly along, nor hide the sun from view." I do not mean the dark, black clouds which are impenetrable, but the upper clouds on a summer's day: through them the sun diffuses his light and heat, so that while they pass, one is scarcely aware of them. I have my clouds, weakness, weariness, and pains; but my greatest pain is, when thinking on the pain of separation; nevertheless, through all these, Jesus, my blessed sun, is seen. He soothes and cheers me; and but for the sorrow of my dearest Joseph, I should say, I am without anxiety."

February 5th. Was spent chiefly in arranging domestic concerns, and the still more awful concerns of her funeral.—She said, "if there MUST be a funeral sermon, let the text be, Psalm xxiii. 4. The hymns

THE FIRST.

"When languor and disease invade
This trembling house of clay,
'Tis sweet to look beyond our cage,
And long to fly away, &c."

THE SECOND.

"Here what the voice from heaven proclaims
For all the pious dead;
Sweet is the savour of their names,
And soft their sleeping bed, &c."

THE THIRD.

"The Lord my shepherd is,
I shall be well supplied,
Since he is mine, and I am his,
What can I want beside, &c."

She strictly enjoined, "Let nothing be said of me, but what grace has done in me, and done for me. I have hope towards God beyond a doubt; and this hope is founded, not on frames or visions, but a comparison of my state with the word of my God. There I read, man is a poor, lost, ignorant, unholy creature. I both believe it and feel it, but so effectually has grace wrought in me, that though lost, I cry unto God for mercy—though ignorant, I go unto him for wisdom. I find the *gospel suited to my state.* I look out of myself entirely. I go as one utterly lost to Jesus Christ. I wish no alteration in the doctrine of his cross. I would be saved in the very way he has revealed, though I had the choice of more, and millions more, if possible."

February 6th. A friend calling, she said to her, "My hopes rest on the Deity and atonement of our Lord Jesus Christ. I have told Mr. Berry I would have him preach no other doctrines than those he has done all along; they are doctrines suited to sinners, one of whom is his Eliza."—An old deacon, (much like herself, ripening for glory) when he approached her bed-side, said, "well, my good friend, how do you do now!" To whom she replied, "Almost at home—my precious Bible, true every tittle—I never thought it could have supported me thus, but it does—I never thought I could have enjoyed so much—I have not an anxious wish—It is heaven *already* begun—I am happy as I can be on this side heaven—

"A mortal paleness on my cheek
And glory in my soul."

A friend from a little distance calling that evening, she spake most delightfully of her extatic joy, and as he was taking his farewell, and leaving her with the mention of the name of Jesus, she closed the conversation, repeating,

"A guilty, weak, and helpless worm,
On thy kind arm I fall;
Be thou my strength and righteousness,
My Jesus, and my all."

February 11. To several friends she said, "Jesus is very precious. I have no anxiety. Every thing is settled. My drawers, my house, my treasurer's books, my children, my all—I have nothing to do but die and go home."

February 13. She said to a friend, "Surely all this cannot be delusion." To another, "I am not gone yet. The dross is not all taken

away; I shall not go till it is." The last friend who saw her on that day, witnessed her very much enfeebled indeed, but putting his ear towards her, he distinctly heard the whisper, "All is heaven and peace within." While her husband and servant were turning her in the bed, she remarked, "Ah, my dear, it is hard work," and recollecting, caught up her words, "Hard did I say! no, I'll recall that word, it looks like repining; it is not hard, but requires more than nature to acquiesce in."

February 15. To a friend she observed, "It seems as if there were no enemy. He is, as good Bunyan says, 'as still as a stone.'" I scarcely think of *him*. My Jesus is all my salvation, and all my desire."

February 16. "My Jesus is very precious to me. Had I had breath, oh how could I have sung of him in the night." On a kind friend's leaving her, she said, "Tell your dear sister what I enjoy; it is not like a death bed—it is sleeping in my Jesus's arms."

February 17. When it was thought she was actually going "It is sweet to die in Jesus—Bless God, my dear, I am so happy—Though I walk through the valley," &c. About a quarter past eleven o'clock that evening, while profound silence was kept, she broke it, and with seemingly more than human voice she uttered

> "There shall we see his face,
> And never, never sin,
> There from the rivers of his grace
> Drink endless pleasures in."

Pausing, as though every word seemed a feast to her soul, she added—

> "For ever his dear sacred name
> Shall dwell upon my tongue,
> And Jesus and salvation be
> The close of every song."

Her breath scarcely allowing her to reach the last word, she lay quietly meditating, but after waiting perhaps more than a minute, with seraphic accents she burst forth again—

> Yes, thou art precious to my soul,
> My transport and my trust,
> Jewels to thee are gaudy toys,
> And gold is sordid dust.

Her arms falling, her husband attempted to put the one next him into bed. Speaking of her being much reduced, she said "Worms will not feast much on me.—Blessed be God I am not afraid of worms.

> "Though greedy worms devour my skin
> And gnaw my wasting flesh,
> When God shall build my bones again,
> He clothes them all afresh."

In the night, she begged her husband to pray once more with her. He did it; but when it was over she said "My dear, you have forgotten to pray for one thing." He asked "What is that?" "Why, that we may be prepared for and supported in the parting hour." When he intimated the difficulty of doing it, she pleasingly and firmly replied, "Well, *I* can do it; and much as I love my Joseph, I can leave him to go to my Jesus." And then taking his hand, she prayed, acknowledging the kindness of God in uniting them, the happiness they had proved in each other, &c. After this she dozed and enjoyed some calm hours. About ten minutes past seven in the morning she was evidently seized for death. During her illness she had frequently requested Christian friends to pray for an easy dismissal, and God, her gracious God, answered prayer. While the perspiration was breaking forth in all directions, and every oozing drop seemed larger and larger, she inarticulately uttered, in broken accents—"Valley—Shadow—Home—Jesus—*Peace.*"

She seemed free from pain. Without a struggle she lay for nearly twenty minutes, and at twelve minutes before eight o'clock her head gently dropped on the left side of her pillow; her last pulse was felt by the hand of her anguished husband, and her disembodied spirit soared to the presence of her God.

After these statements, I need not say that this was a highly *indulged and honoured death.*

But it is also a *mournful* one. All that so eminently fitted her for heaven, equally fitted her for earth. We have but comparatively few of this character. Yet these are the persons we want. We want them, for they are the dew of heaven, the salt of the earth, the light of the world. We want them as intercessors, as defenders, as benefactors, as examples. Every loss therefore will draw forth tears—and *must*, if we would escape the reproach of insensibility charged upon the Jews; *The righteous perisheth, and no man layeth it to heart; and merciful men are taken away, none considering that the righteous is taken away from the evil to come.*

Yes, you find it a mournful one, O ye poor whom she succoured. Yes, you find it a mournful one, O ye schools of charity whom she inspected. Yes, you find it a mournful one, O ye friends with whom she took sweet counsel.—

—But what shall I say to you, my dear, my afflicted brother; to whom God has said—*Son of man, behold I take from thee the desire of thine eyes with a stroke!*

What shall I say to you, ye bereaved children, whose loss at present you are unable to estimate. A wife may be replaced, but a mother cannot. *As one whom his mother comforteth*, so may our heavenly Father comfort you. May he *take you up* as the God of providence and of grace; *guide* you with *his counsel*, and *afterward receive you to glory.*

The death is no less *instructive.* It says, in feeling accents,

> The dear delights we here enjoy,
> And fondly call our own,
> Are but short favours borrowed now
> To be repaid anon.

It warns us, that in the midst of life we are in death. It urges us to *seek the Lord while he may be found, and to call upon him while he is near.*

So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom.

I conclude a service which I fear would have been tedious, had not the saint furnished more than the preacher, with three remarks.

The first regards the efficiency of divine grace: for, by the grace of God, she was what she was; and we ought to glorify God in her. See under the agency of this principle what human nature even in this world may become!—And since this grace is the same, and is not only sufficient for us, but attainable by us, let us be strong in it; let us ask that we may have, and seek that we may find.

The second regards the impression of character. What is it that has put to silence the ignorance of foolish men, so that against this child of Israel not a dog moves his tongue? What is it that prompts the language of lamentation or encomium from every one you converse with in the house, or meet with in the street? What is it that has induced almost every member in this church, and almost every hearer in this meeting, to appear in the attire of mourners? What has this morning, turned this place of worship into a *Bochim*, or place of tears? What has led the ministers and congregations of this town voluntarily to shut up their own sanctuaries, and come here to weep with those that weep? The deceased was only a private character—It is true; but she was a decided character. She was a consistent character. She was an amiable character. She was an inoffensive character. She was a benevolent character. She neither lived nor died to herself; *and he that in these things serveth Christ, is acceptable to God, and approved of men.*

The third regards a reflection, which, though it be often made, cannot be made too often; and which the subject we have explained, and the event we have considered, alike urge upon us—it is the excellency of genuine religion. It does not indeed exempt us from the calamities of life or the stroke of death, but this it does: it prepares us for them; it supports us under them; it turns the curse into a blessing; it removes the fear of evil; it enables us to dwell at ease in a world of changes and alarms; it affords us comfort, even in death. And who is the man truly happy? Not he who has health, but he who is prepared to lose it. Not he who has a portion on earth; but he who has laid up treasure in heaven. He it is who can look forward without dismay; he it is who can pass an hour among the tombs and say—"Hither I hope I am willing to come, when my father shall send the summons." The end crowns the action; and the proverb tells us all is well that ends well. I am far from allowing that religion has no present claims and advantages, for it has the promise of the life that now is, as well as of that which is to come—but allowing that it is, what many people falsely imagine it to be, a system of sacrifice and self-denial only, all toil and all gloom; yet it has this unparalleled recommendation—it ends well—it ends infinitely well; and *I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed. Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright; for the end of that man is peace.* O when you come to finish your course, to be able to say with Jacob; *I have waited for thy salvation, O Lord!* When the body is falling to pieces to be able to say with Job; *I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth. And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God.* With Simeon to be raised above the love of life, and the fear of death, and to be able to say, *Lord now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation.*—What can you wish for like this!—*Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his!* Amen

THE LOSS OF CONNEXIONS DEPLORED AND IMPROVED:

A SERMON

PREACHED IN ARGYLE CHAPEL, BATH, ON SUNDAY MORNING, SEPTEMBER 26, 1813,

OCCASIONED BY THE DEATH OF

MR. THOMAS PARSONS,

Who Died the 18th of September, in the 70th Year of his Age.

BY WILLIAM JAY.

TO THE BEREAVED FAMILY OF HIS HIGHLY ESTEEMED FRIEND,

This Sermon, preached to improve the death of their honoured father, and published at their request, is dedicated, with esteem, affection, and sympathy, by THE AUTHOR.

Lover and friend hast thou put far from me, and mine acquaintance into darkness.—Psalm lxxxviii. 18.

MY BRETHREN,—We were obviously designed to live not in a solitary, but a connected state. Even in Paradise, and according to the judgment of God himself, "It was not good for man to be alone." Our nature and condition, our inclinations and necessities, our excellencies and weaknesses, alike indicate our destination, and contribute to render us social beings.

Some of the finest feelings of the human heart are called forth by the various unions of life, and much of our happiness depends upon the endearments of society.

But what blessing below the skies, is perfect and unalloyed? Every pleasure has its corresponding pain. The wider our sphere of action, the more varied our interests, and the keener our sensibility; the better mark are we for the arrows of disappointment. Our losses arise, and can *only* arise, from our possessions. Our affections produce our distresses and our tears.

> "Our roses grow on thorns,
> And our honey wears a sting.

So that, from the sober estimate of reason, as well as the hasty feelings of passion, we begin, at length, to acknowledge the mortifying truth; "All is vanity and vexation of spirit."

But none of our comforts are more heavily taxed than our social. Our connexions often make us weep; and they do this, three ways.

First; We weep *for* them. Jeremiah said of some of his hearers, "My soul shall weep in secret places for your pride." There are frequently things in our dearest friends, that we long to rectify or remove. We hint our minds; we admonish; we beseech; but in vain: and nothing is left, but to grieve—that a freckle should injure a fair moral visage; that occasional imprudence should defeat talent and excellency; that a peculiarity of temper should hinder the display or the impression of principle; and that where there is so much to extol, there should be any thing to extenuate.

Secondly; We weep *with* them. In proportion as we love another we necessarily sympathize with him; we make his grief as well as gladness our own; we launch in the same vessel, and partake of the storm as well as the breeze together.

Lastly; We weep *over* them: for none of them are durable; and as they are seccessively withdrawn from us, the world grows

dreary, and the "desolate heart" cries, "LOVER AND FRIEND HAST THOU PUT FAR FROM ME, AND MINE ACQUAINTANCE INTO DARKNESS."

Let me remark—The connexions which give a charm to life—consider, the loss of them—trace, The agency of God in their removal—teach you, How to improve such dispensations of Providence—and introduce a tribute of respect to the memory of our late and esteemed fellow-worshipper, Mr. Thomas Parsons.

I. Let me remark, The connexions which give a charm to life. David mentions three; Lover, Friend, and Acquaintance.

First; "Lover." As this is distinguished from Friend and Acquaintance, it stands for the tender relative. By nothing is such a connexion so properly characterized as affection; for love in kindred is considered natural and unavoidable; it is in a great measure instinctive; and it is also fanned and fed by sameness of residence, constancy of intercourse, and mutual interests, attentions, and obligations. "Lover," therefore, recalls to mind, The Husband: the Wife: the Father: the Mother: the Child: the Brother: the Sister, and other dear ties of flesh and blood.

Secondly; He mentions "Friend." This is a sacred name, which many usurp, and few deserve. It cannot be applied to the confederate in sin; or, to the mercenary, selfish wretch, that loves you, because he wants to make use of you, as a builder values a ladder, or a passenger a boat. Friendship is founded in a community of heart. It supposes some strong congeniality, yet admits of great diversity. Of all the twelve apostles, Peter and John seem to have been the most attached to each other; and yet who can help supposing a considerable difference in some of their attributes! The one was more forward, the other more reserved; the one more bold, the other more timid; the one more severe, the other more soft and gentle; the one a hand, the other an eye; yet they were "of one heart and of one soul."

We may be assured that these amities, which enter so much into our present welfare and enjoyment, and which, continuing to flow with an even, or increasing current, through so many years and changes, fertilize and adorn the vale of life, are peculiarly designed and formed by our heavenly Father, who is said so often in the Scripture, to give a man favour in the eyes of another. But, with regard to ourselves, some of the choicest friendships are accidentally produced. We thought not of the connexion the day, the hour before: perhaps we traveled the same road; or we met in some mixed company; or we received, or we administered some token of kindness—and from such a small seed blown by the wind, sprang up this heavenly tree, under the shadow of whose branches we have been so often refreshed.

Thirdly. David speaks of the loss of "Acquaintance." Acquaintances are distinguished from friends. The former may be numerous; the latter must be limited. The one is for the parlour, the other is for the closet. We give the hand to the one, we reserve the bosom for the other. We go to the one with a smiling countenance, we repair to the other in a cloudy and dark day, and when we have a burden too heavy for us to bear. Yet though acquaintances are inferior to friends, they are not without their importance, and add much to our accommodation and pleasure. Such are the agreeable connexions of life, the loss of which we

II. Proceed to consider. "Lover and friend hast thou put far from me, and mine acquaintance into darkness." There are two ways by which we may be deprived of our connexions.

The first is by desertion. The highest degree of this crime, is the want of natural affection. And yet husbands have hated their own flesh instead of nourishing and cherishing it. Fathers have not provided for those of their own house, but have left them to ignorance and want. "Can a *woman* forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? She may." Savage's mother is not the only one, that has abhorred and persecuted the offspring of her own bowels.

Perfidy is a vile thing, but not a very rare one. How many kiss in order to betray; and gain your confidence, to sting when you are lulled to sleep. A brother is born for adversity; but the very season in which we need his assistance and kindness, is commonly the hour of abandonment: and the heart aghast with surprise and grief, groans "Ahithophel is among the conspirators with Absalom:" "It was not an enemy that reproached me: then I could have borne it; neither was it he that hated me, that did magnify himself against me; then I would have hid myself from him: but it was thou, a man, mine equal, my guide, and mine acquaintance: we took sweet counsel together, and went to the house of God in company."

Sometimes weakness rather than wickedness robs us. Job's friends condemned him because they misunderstood his character: when they were undeceived, they returned to him with presents. "At my first answer," says Paul, "no man stood by me;" they were panic struck and fled; and he only prays that it might not be laid to their charge.

Men are often called into distant situations, where they necessarily feel new impressions, and are engrossed with new engagements: and thus in the ordinary course of things, and where no blame attaches, we must reckon upon some social losses. To which we may

add, That sometimes, where censure is deserved, the fault appertains to those who complain and upbraid: they themselves having been unamiable, inattentive, unkind. "He that will have friends must show himself friendly."

The second way of losing our connexions is by bereavement. This is principally, if not exclusively here intended: "Lover and friend hast thou put *far from* me; and mine acquaintance *into darkness*;" that is, they are lodged in the gloomy grave, "The land of darkness, and the shadow of death; a land of darkness, as darkness itself; and of the shadow of death, without any order, and where the light is as darkness."

What the apostle says of the Jewish priests is applicable to all our connexions: "They are not suffered to continue by reason of death." The greatness of the affliction occasioned by their removal, it is not easy to describe.—Several things add poignancy to the loss.

First; They are of great importance to us here. In some cases, the bereaved are deprived of worldly support. The widow is called down from elegance and ease, to struggle with hardship and distress; the children lose the caresses of the neighbourhood, and are exposed to insult; perhaps they become vagabonds, and learn to beg their bread. How much depends often upon a single individual! Great and little are comparative. What a slender aid will render one a benefactor, and another a beneficiary anxious for his life! One day at a funeral, turning away from the mouth of the grave, I saw an aged female weeping. Her left hand held a grandchild; with her right she raised the corner of her woollen apron to wipe the tears that ran down her furrowed cheek. "What, said I, have you lost a friend?" "O Sir, that good woman, allowed me a shilling a week." "My God," said I, as soon as I was withdrawn a little, "And can the application of so small a sum, so deeply interest the feelings, and so essentially promote the comfort of a fellow-creature? Who would waste a farthing; who would not economize; who would not deny himself, to be able to do good?"

By the removal of our connexions we are deprived of their company. They no longer beguile the social hours and the social walk. The eye that beamed kindness is sealed up in darkness, and the tongue that charmed us is dumb for ever.

We are deprived of their example. We are deprived of their reproofs. We are deprived of their counsels. We are deprived of their prayers. What a loss is here!

Secondly. We cannot recall them. We were sometimes separated before, but the absence from each other was partial and transient. When they left us in the evening, it was that they might take rest in sleep: the morning restored the circle. But "man lieth down and riseth not till the heavens be no more, they shall not awake nor be raised out of their sleep." When they journeyed, it was to revisit their abode again, and the expectation of meeting, relieved the tear at parting. But they are now "gone the way whence they shall not return."

Thirdly. We can have no intercourse or correspondence with them. If you have friends in America, or the East Indies, it is possible for you to commune with them still, by messengers, or writing. But who can tell what regions of space separate between us, and our departed connexions! Who can tell in what part of his vast universe they are placed; for in our "Father's house are many mansions!"—We can receive no intelligence from them, and they can receive none from us. "His sons come to honour, and he knoweth it not, and they are brought low, but he perceiveth it not of them." "Abraham is ignorant of us, and Israel acknowledges us not." "Also their love and their hatred, and their envy is now perished; neither have they any more a portion for ever in any thing that is done under the sun."

Hence, Fourthly. They cannot promote our welfare where they now are. If our friends by dying, increase their knowledge, and learn that the state they left us in, is a state of religious delusion; they cannot rectify our mistake, or send to warn us of our danger. They have left us, with Moses and the Prophets. Elijah, in his last walk with Elisha, was convinced that his usefulness to his successor was restricted to this life; and therefore he said, "Ask now what I shall do for thee before I be taken away from thee." This is a solemn reflection for the living, and it should operate as a constant stimulus. With what diligence should we do the work of him that sent us while it is *day;* for the *night* cometh wherein *no man can work*."

III. Let us trace the agency of God in their removal: "Lover and friend hast *Thou* put far from me, and mine acquaintance into darkness."

In the experience of the believer, the work and the enjoyment of heaven are begun on earth. We read, "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." This is the representation of their employment, and their blessedness. They shall see God! They shall see him completely. They shall see him only. Though ten thousand objects will be there, nothing will be seen but God. There are angels, but they are his servants. There are spirits of just men made perfect, but they are his jewels. There will be new heavens and a new earth, but they are his throne and his footstool. Thus every thing will only serve to reflect or proclaim God; and according to the sublime sentiment of

the apostle, "God will be all in all." But the believer sees him now. While others live without God in the world, and God is not in all their thoughts, he sees him in his word; sees him in his house; sees him in his works, and in his ways; sees him in all occurrences and events. He sees him in the garden, and in the field; sees him in the rose and in the corn; sees him in the sun and in the glow-worm. "The day is thine," says he, "the night also is thine. Thou hast made summer and winter. Thou makest the outgoings of the morning and evening to rejoice. Thou visitest the earth, and waterest it. Thou makest it soft with showers. Thou blessest the springing thereof. Thou crownest the year with thy goodness; and thy paths drop down fatness."

If light attends the course I run,
'Tis he provides those rays,
And 'tis his hand that hides my sun,
If darkness veils my days.

"O," says one, when any evil befalls him, "it was that unlucky accident; it was that unfaithful friend; it was that malicious foe; it was that careless servant:" but when the news of an awful judgment reached Eli, *he* said, "It is the *Lord*, let him do what seemeth him good." When Job heard that the Sabeans and the Chaldeans, and the elements had robbed him of his substance, his servants, and his children, *he* said, "The *Lord* gave and the *Lord* hath taken away." The death of Christ, was "the hour and power of darkness." It was Judas that betrayed him; it was Peter that denied him; it was Pilate that condemned him; they were the Jews and the Romans that crucified him—but *he* saw neither of them: he only eyed God—"The cup which my *father* hath given me shall I not drink it?" And so David in his relative losses; he does not say, "It was that unskilful physician: it was that fatal delay; it was that improper medicine;" he only thinks and speaks of *God:* "Lover and friend hast *Thou* put far from me, and mine acquaintance into darkness."

The Scripture abundantly confirms this pious and consoling sentiment. It assures us that every thing, however minute or casual, is providential. "It tells us that a sparrow falls not to the ground without our heavenly Father: and that the very hairs of our head are all numbered." It asks, "Is there an evil in the city, and the Lord hath not done it?" It represents Jehovah as saying, "I create peace, and I make trouble. I wound, and I heal; I kill, and I make alive."

If therefore you have been deprived of your interesting connexions, remember that *He* has done it. He has done it—

—Who is almighty and irresistible: "He taketh away, and who can hinder him, or say unto him, What doest thou;" He has done it—

—Who had a right to do it. If they were your friends, they were his creatures and servants: and was he obliged to ask your permission, to do what he would with his own? He has done it—

—Who was too wise to err, and too kind to injure *in* doing it. For, my brethren, while we allow that God in such dealings is sovereign, we deny that he is ever arbitrary. He often indeed "giveth no account of any of his matters;" and the reasons which govern him are commonly far above out of our sight, so that he frequently *appears* to act from his *pleasure* only: but he has reasons; he always has motives of preference, which would more than justify him were they fully known. Our Saviour, therefore, does not refer to his will, but to his wisdom; "Yea, O Father, for—so thou wouldest?" no—but, "so it *seemed good in thy sight*," and what seems good to him, must be really good. We may be imposed upon, but he is not mocked. "We know that the judgment of God is always according to truth."

We may also be very imperfect judges of our own welfare; and not be able to see how certain events *can* ever befriend us: but, says the apostle, "We know that all things work together for good to them that love God." And again: "Whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth." This is the proper view we are to take of our afflictions. They are the result of divine goodness. They are the discipline of a father. They are the prunings of a husbandman, to insure better fruit. They are the ploughing of the fallow ground, to prepare it for the reception of the seed. They are the refinings of the furnace, that when we are tried we may come forth as gold.—This brings us

IV. To teach you, How to improve such dispensations of Providence. And here let me observe, that we should improve them in a way of sympathy; in a way of gratitude; in a way of precaution; and in a way of resignation.

First; We should improve them in a way of sympathy. Let us always feel tenderly for those who have been bereaved. They need it. Every circumstance in their situation cries, "Pity me, pity me, O ye my friends, for the hand of God hath touched me." Are we not commanded "to be pitiful;" to "bear one another's burdens;" to "strengthen the weak hands and confirm the feeble knees?" Let us suppose *our* friends removed. Let us imagine *ourselves*—waking in the dead of night—rising in the morning—going from room to room—meeting with the books they folded down—sitting at table, where David's seat is empty—kneeling without them at the family altar—stripped—divided—torn to pieces; let us place our souls in their souls' stead—that we may not be severe to mark

what they do amiss under such a pressure of anguish—that we may pray for them—that we may assist them—that we may soothe them—and gain the character Job had deserved, "as one that comforteth the mourners."

Secondly; We should improve such dispensations, in a way of gratitude. Is not the affliction which we have pourtrayed your own? Have you not been visited with breach upon breach! And who has kept your house from becoming a house of mourning? Who has preserved from year to year, your connexions? Who has relatives down to the very gates of the grave, guarded them in the dangerous path of life, from every accident and disease?—Some of you have followed your beloved friends and stood weeping and trembling behind them. With what joy did you hear the sentence "Return ye children of men;" with what pleasure did you walk back with them: with what zeal for the time, did you resolve to serve him who had "performed all things for you!" Has the sense of your obligations continued? Where are the effects and the proofs of it? Have you rendered according to the benefit done you? If a person had preserved a dear connexion, in whom your happiness was bound up, from the sword of an assassin; you would feel indebted to him through life: and if you neglected him, every one would be ready to shun you. Yea, and this has been the case, if a fond and faithful animal had rescued a husband, or a child from a watery grave, even the poor dumb deliverer would have retained your regard. Yes—the instrument is to be acknowledged, while the agent is to be disowned; the creature—a man—a dog!—ought to be remembered; it is only God that is to be forgotten. *He* who is "The preserver of men." *He* "in whom we live and move and have our being." O weep, weep, over your vile, your wretched unthankfulness; and hourly ask; ask every moment; "What shall I render to the Lord for all his benefits towards me?"

Thirdly; We should improve such dispensations, in a way of precaution. We should hold our connexions with a loose hand, and be prepared for the removal of them when the summons comes. Whence arises the anguish of affliction? From disappointment. From what does disappointment arise? From high expectations. Who is to blame for the indulgence of high expectations?—Where are we now! Alas! We do not believe that our friends are mortal. We are so attached to them that we cannot bear to realize the thoughts of separation. We forget the brief, the precarious term on which we take them. We consider that to be given, which is only lent. Hence at last, when the event befalls us, it kills us by surprise. But who is chargeable with this surprise? Not *he*, who has said, "Arise and depart hence, for this is not your rest." Not *he*, who in so many ways has said "Cease from man whose breath is in his nostrils; for wherein is he to be accounted of." Not *he*, who says "Time is short, it remains therefore that both they that have wives be as though they had none; and they that weep as though they wept not; and they that rejoice as though they rejoiced not; and they that buy as though they possessed not; and they that use this world as not abusing it; for the fashion of this world passeth away."

Lastly; We should improve bereaving events: in a way of resignation. It is too common for persons, when they would console the bereaved, to endeavour to diminish a sense of the greatness of their loss. But the afflicted will be sure to reject such consolation as this. Their very esteem and affection will lead them to revolt at it. Neither is such a mode necessary, or proper: it is not a scriptural mode. There is no grace in *bearing* what we do *not feel:* nor can we *resign* what we do not *value.* I would rather say to the afflicted, Your case is trying.—

But you have heard that the hand of God is in it; and by this consideration, David was silenced; "I was dumb; I opened not my mouth; because *thou* didst it." Your case is trying—

But it is not peculiar. Thousands are now mourning; and mourning in a condition far worse than your's. Your connexions are removed—

But perhaps they are taken away from the evil to come. Perhaps that child, whose death cost you so many tears, would, if he had lived, have broken your heart. Perhaps that Christian friend who departed with so fair a memory, would, had he continued longer, have been drawn aside by temptation, and have disgraced his profession. Perhaps that beloved relative, might have been rendered a sufferer for life, and you have been the worn-out spectator of the pain and anguish, which you could not even relieve. It is certain that if they were the followers of Jesus, by remaining here, they would have been still at sea; but they have now entered the desired haven: they would have been still at war; but now their warfare is accomplished. They are removed—

But the change is infinitely to their advantage. It is a deliverance: an advancement: a consummation. If absent from the body, they are present with the Lord. They have reached all that they valued and toiled after here. And therefore pause before you say—and actions can speak;—"I am sorry, they are released from prison; I am sorry, they will no more say, I am sick; I am sorry, they behold his face in righteousness, and are satisfied." If you loved them, you would rejoice because they said, We go unto the Father They are removed—

But you are going after, and will join them again. The separation is but temporary. If life be short, your want of them cannot be long. They are removed—

But their departure has rendered this earth, which we must leave, less attractive; and placed more allurement beyond the skies, and our conversation ought to be in heaven. Finally: if lover, friend, and acquaintance are gone—

God is not. He is near you. He is with you. He has said "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee." He is a very present help in trouble. He can sanctify every loss. He can more than repair it. He has supports and compensations that can enable you even to glory in tribulation. You may therefore say with the Saviour, "I am left alone and yet I am not alone, because the Father is with me."

My *bereaved hearers*, you who have lost an agreeable and instructive acquaintance; you who have lost a delightful and edifying friend; and especially you, who have lost a tender, honoured, and invaluable parent; in addressing the afflicted, you will consider me as having peculiarly addressed you. "Wherefore comfort one another with these words." Indeed the whole course of our meditation has been so applicable to the providence we are reviewing, that little remains to be said, especially as the design of funeral notices should be to impress the living, rather than to eulogize the dead.

To characterize at all, or to characterize justly, is not, in many cases, an easy thing. Some individuals run into the mass of sameness, and no peculiar feature can be seized by which to distinguish them. Others have a singularity of attributes and actions, upon which it may not be always proper to pronounce, and concerning which, people will decide according to their respective views and feelings.

The original character that comes before us this morning, has given rise to a great diversity, and a great uniformity of opinion: but the uniformity of conviction embraces what is truly excellent and praiseworthy, while the diversity regards only what is less important. I feel the difficulty of the delineation on which I am entering, but by the grace of God I shall speak without flattery, and without fear.

Mr. Thomas Parsons was the only son of the late venerable pastor of the Baptist church in this city. He received a good, though not a learned education; and early discovered very superior powers of mind, which he constantly cultivated by reading and exercise. His acquaintance with science at large was very considerable. His talents were indeed sufficient to have rendered him illustrious in any one department of knowledge; but instead of concentrating his attention and application to a single subject, he diffused them over an extensive surface; and thus gained general information, rather than remarkable pre-eminence in any one particular branch. His proficiency, however, in sculpture, drawing, mineralogy, chemistry, astronomy, and moral philosophy, was by no means common.

His apprehension was distinguished by a peculiar quickness and clearness. He seemed to know intuitively every subject that came before him; and he was able to express himself concerning it, with the most happy precision and ease.

No one was ever so little inclined to take any thing on trust, or so little in danger of becoming the slave of prerogative and authority.

As a reader, he accustomed himself to write a critique on the work he was perusing; and it commonly leaned to the side of censure; for he had a singular sagacity in detecting errors and mistakes which others overlooked.

An opinion has generally prevailed, that as a hearer, our friend did not exercise his great censorial abilities very tenderly, in consequence of which, many dreaded to preach before him. But this charge must be taken with very considerable qualification. He lothed indeed every thing that bordered on the spiritual coxcomb; and scrupled not to make free with inflated academicians, and all those who, by their confident and self-ceited manner, seemed more than satisfied with their own performances, and defied rather than deprecated criticism. But he always esteemed grace more than talent. He often remarked, that stirling and elevated piety, in the simplest character, is far superior to the finest intellect, and the most extensive acquirements unassociated with the fear of God. The man who was "serious in a serious cause;" whose aim appeared to be only usefulness; who was not aping any one; nor attempting things beyond his reach; and who did not dogmatize and condemn others; however humble his claims, was not likely to miss his approbation. I have often heard him observe, of what importance it was to bring the affections into exercise in public performances; expressing also his conviction, that an obvious solicitude in a preacher to do good, had contributed more to his usefulness, than any one quality besides. In a word, he only *acted in prose* what Cowper has expressed in poetry:

> In man or woman, but far most in man,
> And most of all in man that ministers
> And serves the altar, in my soul I loth
> All *affectation*. 'Tis my perfect scorn;
> Object of my implacable disgust.
> What!—will a man play tricks, will he indulge
> A silly fond conceit of his fair form,
> And just proportion, fashionable mien,
> And pretty face, in presence of his God?
> Or, will he seek to dazzle me with tropes,
> As with the diamond on his lily hand,
> And play his brilliant parts before mine eyes,

When I am hungry for the bread of life?
* * * * * *
—Therefore avaunt all attitude, and stare,
And start theatric, practis'd at the glass!
I seek divine *simplicity* in him,
Who handles things divine; and all besides,
Though learn'd with labour, and though much admir'd
By curious eyes and *judgments ill-informed*,
To me is odious—*

As an author, Mr. P. published but little; and as this was principally of a local and temporary nature, it never spread very widely. In the dispute a few years ago in this city concerning the antichristianism of *all* war, he was deeply engaged; and they who were not complete converts to his sentiment, must, I think acknowledge, that he advocated his own principle, in a manner far superior to any thing they had ever seen before: nor did the controversy move or ruffle his temper, or break in upon his friendly intercourse with his reverend and respectable opponent. The same goodness of temper, along with the keenest argument, and very forcible diction, is apparent in his "High church Claims exposed."

He had adopted the opinion of the eloquent, but paradoxical genius, Rousseau, concerning the improper use of fiction in all education and teaching; and a few years ago he wrote a masterly essay on the subject; but it was refused by the periodical writers to whom it was offered: for no talent, however superior, can prove the point against the conviction and practice of the whole world, and the constant usage of our Saviour himself, who always spake in parables.

Many of you well know, that Mr. Parsons for many years officiated as a minister. His preaching had its claims, and marked a very strong and superior mind; but it did not sufficiently abound with doctrinal sentiment. It was too philosophical to be very popular. It required a degree of discernment and taste in the hearers which very few hearers possess. It was also in a style too unlike the common pulpit phraseology to be admired, or perhaps well understood, in the congregations which he generally addressed. This style has indeed been recommended in preference to the usual one; but if we appeal to fact, we find very little in favour of it. Several preachers of superior endowments, who have made the Spectator and Rambler their model for *pulpit* composition, instead of the language of our old divines, freed from their occasional lowness and quaintness; and have too much disused the simple, and well known, yet rich and striking terms and phrases of the present translation; have not met with much acceptance, and have done little good.—Only one of our friend's sermons has passed the press: and this was printed, not published. But it is a most judicious and eloquent production, and worthy (and this is saying much) of the fine female character it so justly describes and extols, the late Mrs. Philips of Melksham.

The deceased excelled in prayer. He was remarkably fluent, and serious, and affecting. Whoever heard him, must have entertained a high opinion of his habitual devotion. In this exercise; I never met with but one, that I could rank with him: I mean my esteemed friend and honoured tutor, the late Cornelius Winter, of whom Mr. Parsons was often heard to say; "That man is more like the image I have formed of Jesus Christ, than any man I ever saw, or expect to see."

For a length of time the son aided his father; but differing from the good old man in some of his high notions; and the difference being magnified by suspicion and officiousness on the side of ignorance, and a refusing to come to explanation on the side of talent; he was interdicted labouring in the church to which he belonged; yet he continued, till within a few very years, to preach as opportunity offered, or as circumstances seemed to render it a duty, in various places, especially in this church, of which, upon the death of his father, he became a member. Our friends here will long remember their obligation to his kindness, in so frequently and promptly supplying them, when they wanted assistance.

With regard to the sentiments of our departed friend, on many of the current topics of theology, strange as it may seem, I profess to know very little, after an affectionate intercourse of four and twenty years. I should infer, and I think fairly infer, from his invariably attending a certain kind of preaching, when it was perfectly optional with him to hear another (and he had an independence of mind that scorned to act but from his own conviction), from the cast of sermons he always selected when he read in his family, and from many general expressions; that in

* How often would he quote from his admired poet:

Would I describe a preacher, such as Paul,
Were he on earth, would hear, approve and own,
Paul should himself direct me. I would trace
His master-strokes, and draw from his design.
I would express him *simple*, grave, sincere;
In doctrine uncorrupt; in language plain,
And plain in manner: decent, solemn, chaste,
And *natural in gesture; much impress'd Himself*, as conscious of his awful charge,
And *anxious mainly* that the flock he feeds
May feel it too! *affectionate in look*,
And *tender in address*, as well becomes
A messenger of grace to guilty men.
—Is it like?—Like whom?
* * * * * *

He would also say—

For ghostly counsel, if it be not backed
With show of love, at least with hopeful proof
Of some sincerity on the giver's part;
Or be dishonoured in the exterior form
And mode of its conveyance by such tricks
As move derision, or by foppish airs
And histrionic mummery, that could let down
The pulpit to the level of the stage;
Drops from the lips a disregarded thing.
The *weak* perhaps are *moved*, but are not *taught*,
While prejudice in men of *stronger minds*
Takes deeper root, confirmed by what they see.

his leading doctrinal views he nearly approximated what is called orthodoxy. But he had imbibed an ineffable contempt for all creeds drawn up by fallible men. He would not endure *systematic* divinity. He considered revelation indeed as a *divine* system; but contended, that, in our present state, we are incompetent to diffuse our minds over the whole; and therefore, that it is our wisdom to be satisfied with a limited knowledge of it, studying and improving those parts that bear upon our duty and welfare, and for the rest, to "Wait the great teacher death, and God adore." He wished to bring men to the Bible for facts, rather than opinions. He would have them introduced into this "Broad land of wealth unknown," if possible, by a silent guide; or by one who, instead of prepossessing them in favour of particular spots as he went along, should praise the whole: and when there, he would have them left to explore for themselves; and be perfectly free to move in what direction they pleased, regardless how widely they diverged from each other, while they all kept on holy ground. He allowed, that though there could be no real contradictions in the Scriptures, there were many apparent ones; and as various things seem contradictory to a child, which easily and beautifully accord in the mind of a man, so some doctrines revealed in the gospel, and which perfectly harmonize in the view of the Supreme Intelligence, will elude all our attempts at reconciliation, till we come of age. Hence, instead of torturing the obvious language of Revelation, he deemed it better to give every text its own plain and unforced meaning. Theological systematizers, he would observe, contrive at least to escape all inconsistencies in language; but the sacred authors have numerous expressions which all parties dislike. Had the epistles been written by Gill or Whitby, many passages would have been omitted, or very differently worded. There are texts which are the torment of Calvinists, and there are texts which are the grief of Arminians.

I have here endeavoured to show, as clearly as I could, the disposition of our friend's mind, with regard to religious inquiry. And here I confess, I go a considerable distance with him, and in stating *his* views, I have in a great measure expressed my *own*. But you will excuse my saying, that I always feared his candour bordered too much on latitudinarianism; and that he did not attach, or at least evince that he attached, sufficient importance to certain doctrinal truths. I mention this the more freely, because you will bear me witness, how often I express and expose an opposite extreme. For how many are there, especially in our day, who attach too much importance to sentiment: I do not mean if taken in its connexion and influence—Then we cannot be too strenuous in the support of it; for, as a late writer observes, "If error be harmless," truth is in the same proportion worthless: but I speak of sentiment abstractedly considered; when faith is valued, not as the principle of holiness and good works, but a substitute for them; when the creed dispenses with the Lord's prayer, and the ten commandments; when people think it sufficient, if their notions are sound, though their lives are worldly, or their hearts full of envy, malice, and all uncharitableness. May we always hear a voice behind us, saying, "This is the way, walk ye in it, when we turn to the right hand, and when we turn to the left."

But what I least admired in the subject of this address, was too great a love of singularity in his general opinions, which led him so frequently to dissent from what was said in company, and turned conversation into an intellectual contest: a willingness to perplex people as to his notions, or to excite suspicions of his heterodoxy: a degree of mental severity, that inclined him more profusely to censure than to applaud, and to notice blemishes, rather than beauties: and, above all, a freedom of discourse upon religious subjects, before young persons, and people not decidedly religious, from which, those who well knew him, would not have inferred his belief, but from which, others were in danger of erroneously doing so, and of acting under the countenance of his supposed authority. But for this, he must have been idolized. I mention it with tenderness; but I do not, I cannot justify it. I throw a veil of love over it, conscious that, for other imperfections, I need a much larger one myself. My exalted friend would not desire indiscriminate praise—he is too great to stand in need of it. His solid, his extensive, his established, his acknowledged worth can bear a censure. Some are too poor to lose a farthing; but the loss of a purse does not alarm the friends of the rich. It is the insignificant man that dreads reproof: he is "in danger of being snuffed out." But we have not a *candle* before us.

> Defects through nature's best productions run,
> Our friend had spots, and spots are in the sun.

Let me hasten to exhibit, what will combine the suffrage, and will draw forth the praise, of every individual: It is, THE CHARACTER OF THE DEPARTED AS A WHOLE. Here I see no ordinary assemblage of excellency.

Here I see a man peculiarly attached to the volume of inspiration, and the determined enemy of every opinion that would reduce its importance, or share its authority. Even the common distinction between natural and revealed religion, as to their *origin*, he disclaimed; and contended, that *all* religious knowledge was from divine communication, even to the belief of a Supreme Being. Hence Ellis's "Knowledge of Divine Things, not from Reason, but Revelation," was his

favourite book. Hence no institution so completely gained his applause as "The British and Foreign Bible Society." The spread of the Scriptures, without note or comment, was the wish and the delight of his soul.

I see a man possessing a capacity to edify himself and his family at home, regular, and invariable, unless hindered by indisposition, in his attendance on the means of grace; and honouring the worship of God in the week as well as on the Sabbath.

I see a man distinguished by the most inoffensive manners; the most upright conduct; avoiding through life the appearance of evil, and leaving a reputation without a stain.

I see a man the ardent lover of liberty; the hater of war, and of priestcraft; of bigotry and intolerance; of every thing that would divide Christians, or narrow the terms of their communion.

What shall I say of his kindness and usefulness, as an adviser in every difficulty and embarrassment?

What shall I say of the generous benefactor, that never refused distress, when he had it in the power of his hand to relieve; and whose bounty resembled the goodness of our heavenly Father, who maketh his sun to rise, and his rain descend "Upon the evil and the good?"

What shall I say of the friendly correspondent, of the vast and varied circle he indulged; of the hours he employed in letters of edification and comfort, addressed to the fatherless and widow, the poor and the helpless, and in which talent and piety were equally combined?

Observe him at the head of his family. See him walking within his house with a perfect heart, and setting no wicked thing before his eyes. Hear him morning and evening at his domestic altar. Remember the unimpeachable value of the neighbour; the master; the husband; the father—

And you will not wonder that, as a citizen he is so missed; that as a friend he is so lamented; that as a relative he is so beloved: and as a character he is so extolled.

He had nearly reached the general limit of human life. For some years back he was rather infirm: and during the winter, suffered considerable confinement, with much difficulty of breathing.

Of late he seemed better than usual, and had only a week before his death, peculiarly enjoyed a visit at the house of a beloved friend, in a neighbouring town. On the Friday evening, he conversed in his usual manner, with one of his most intimate acquaintances, so late as nine o'clock. But very early on the Saturday morning, he was seized with a complaint in his bowels, which in a few hours carried him off, and with a rapidity that astonished even his old medical attendant. Thus his friends were deprived of an opportunity to see him: and very few knew of his illness, till they were astonished and distressed at the news of his death.——

But let us listen to the voice from "the most excellent glory:" "Is any afflicted let him pray?"——

O God, thou hast been our refuge and dwelling-place in all generations. Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth, and even from everlasting to the world everlasting, thou art God. But as for man his days are as grass; as a flower of the field, so he flourisheth, for the wind passeth over it, and it is gone; and the place thereof shall know it no more.

May each individual in this mournful and numerous assembly, retire and pray, make me to know my end, and the measure of my days, what it is, that I may know how frail I am. May we so reflect on the vanity, brevity, and uncertainty of things, seen and temporal, as supremely to pursue those things which are unseen and eternal. May we seek the pardon of our sin, and the sanctification of our nature, a title to heaven, and a meetness for the inheritance of the Saints in light, with all the ardour and diligence their infinite importance, and the short and precarious season for obtaining them demand.

Before we leave this world, may we not only be prepared for a better, but assured of it; that we may be able to say, The bitterness of death is past; view our dissolution as the signal of our deliverance and triumph; and have an entrance ministered unto us, abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

Establish in us a firm and lively persuasion of thy being, providence, and grace. We bless thee for all our personal and relative comforts. May we always hold them at thy disposal, and be ready to resign them at thy call. And when they are removed from us, enable us to blend the views of the Christian, with the feelings of the creature: and in weeping submission say "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away, and blessed be the name of the Lord."

In thy lovingkindness and tender mercy regard the afflicted family, whose invaluable head thou hast taken from them. We bless thee that he was not prematurely removed in the midst of his days, and before his offspring were reared, educated, and provided for—but matured by years and experience, like a shock of corn fully ripe in his season. We bless thee that those who are mourning over a thousand affecting recollections, sorrow not as others who have no hope; for if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also that sleep in Jesus, will God bring with him. May every tendency to murmur, and even to complain, be lost in the conviction, That all the ways of the Lord

are mercy and truth, unto such as keep his covenant and his testimonies: and that what we know not now, we shall know hereafter. May the house of mourning be found the house of instruction. By the sadness of the countenance, may the heart be made better; more soft to receive holy impressions; and more serious to hear what God the Lord will speak. May the sons and daughters of bereavement, who have added the remains of a long spared father, to the ashes of an early lost mother, be encouraged to confide in thee the living God, and say, When my father and my mother forsake me, then the Lord will take me up. May they never forget the worth to which they have been allied, nor degenerate from those excellencies, which beyond every other patrimonial inheritance, they ought to value. May they have grace to follow those who are gone before them, as far as they were followers of God: that they may look forward, and realize a renewal of intercourse, in a word of perfect and endless friendship.

Eternal Jehovah! we can die easier than we once could! Many of the ties that once bound us to earth, are broken asunder! Our treasure is in heaven:

> There our best friends, our kindred dwell,
> There God our Saviour reigns.

How many whose presence once gave a charm and a relish to life; whose counsels guided us, whose example blessed us; whose hand wiped away our tears—(and we have had many to wipe:)—have left us in this wilderness; while they have reached the promised land, and are made pillars in the temple above, and shall no more go out. We would not draw them out, and bring them back, if it were in our power. We rejoice in their safety, and happiness, and glory. But we are allowed to long for the hour, when we shall be received by them, into everlasting habitations. Thou wilt not suffer us to want, what appears so necessary to our blessedness, the pleasure of knowing those again, whom we have so dearly esteemed. We shall mingle with them again, and the days we have passed in their absence, will appear as a dream. We shall form new and more intimate connexions with them. We shall excite no mutual anxieties. We shall only add to each others pleasure, and promote each others improvement.

"Now unto him that is able to keep us from falling, and to present us faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy; To the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and for ever. Amen.'

THE IMPORTANCE OF AN EVANGELICAL MINISTRY

A SERMON,

DELIVERED AT THE SETTLEMENT OF

THE REV. ARTHUR TIDMAN,

As Pastor of the Congregation of Protestant Dissenters, meeting in Endless-Street Chapel, Salisbury, on Thursday, April the 6th, 1815.

BY WILLIAM JAY.

TO THE REV. ARTHUR TIDMAN, THE CHURCH AND CONGREGATION UNDER HIS CARE, AND ALL HIS BRETHREN IN THE MINISTRY,

Who joined so unanimously and earnestly in requesting the publication, this Discourse is respectfully dedicated by THE AUTHOR.

For we are unto God a sweet savour of Christ, in them that are saved, and in them that perish: to the one, we are the savour of death unto death; and to the other, the savour of life unto life.—2 Cor. ii. 15, 16.

THE appointment of an order of men to preach, is an institution peculiar to Christianity. There was nothing like it in all the heathen world. Their leaders had no wish to inform the common people. Princes and priests were satisfied to take advantage of their ignorance and superstition. Indeed, they had nothing of importance to communicate. They had not even a perfect code of morals. In what passed among them for virtue, there was no clearness, no certainty, no authority: they had no fixed rule to which they could appeal, no powerful sanctions by which they could enforce.

But, "When in the wisdom of God, the world by wisdom knew not God; it pleased God, by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe." The Redeemer himself came, and "preached peace to you that were far off, and to them that were near." And "when he ascended up on high, leading captivity captive, he gave gifts unto men: and he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: till we all come in the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ."

The office, therefore, is of perpetual obligation; and we have been indulged this morning with an encouraging instance of the continuance of it, in the public separation of our young and valued brother, to labour among this people, in the word and doctrine.

—Yes, my friends of this church and congregation, "To you is the word of this salvation sent." "Many prophets and righteous men, have desired to see those things which you see, and have not seen them; and to hear those things which you hear, and have not heard them. But blessed are your eyes, for they see, and your ears, for they hear." "Blessed are the people that know the joyful sound." Or—shall I so soon change my voice —and exclaim—Cursed are the people that know the joyful sound. Cursed are your eyes, for they see, and your ears, for they hear! Let me at once lay open the feelings of my mind, and tell you—That the privilege, by neglect or perversion, may become a penalty: and that your greatest danger grows by the side of your greatest mercy. I wish, therefore in this service, not to abolish

your pleasure, but to qualify it; not to forbid you to rejoice, but to call upon you to rejoice with trembling; and to record in your consciences the admonition of the apostle: "Let us therefore fear, lest a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it."

When Simeon had pressed heaven to his bosom, and delivered back the anointed babe into his mother's arms, he said—"This child is set for the fall, and the rising again, of many in Israel." And such, in reality, is the pleasing and awful destiny of this young minister. The proceedings of this day, and the relation now subsisting between you, wear an eternal importance, and will be reviewed with joy, or anguish for ever. "FOR, WE ARE UNTO GOD A SWEET SAVOUR OF CHRIST, IN THEM THAT ARE SAVED, AND IN THEM THAT PERISH: TO THE ONE WE ARE THE SAVOUR OF DEATH UNTO DEATH; AND TO THE OTHER THE SAVOUR OF LIFE UNTO LIFE."

Let us simplify the passage. It contains only two things; or rather, it contains only one thing, placed in two points of light. Ministers of the gospel are A SAVOUR OF CHRIST: this is the first. Ministers of the gospel ARE VARIOUSLY REGARDED: this is the second.

I. They are A SAVOUR OF CHRIST.

How the expression is to be understood, appears from the preceding words, where the apostle says, "He maketh manifest the savour of his knowledge by us in every place." It shows us, that the knowledge of Christ is not a dry, speculative, uninteresting thing; but has a value, a richness, an attraction in it, that renders it infinitely delightful. Hence the apostle says, "Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss, for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord." And adds, after all his acquaintance with him, "That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings; being made conformable unto his death."

The word savour signifies both odour and relish. It equally takes in what indulges the taste and the smell: and we are called upon to "Taste that the Lord is gracious:" and are told, that "His name is as ointment poured forth."

This then, my dear brother, is the office to which you are called; it is to be a savour of Christ, by diffusing the knowledge of Christ. This you are to make your constant business. This you are to feel your supreme delight. Allow me to mention the way in which you may best subserve this honourable destination. It is by an attention to your PRACTICE—to your CONVERSATION—and to your PREACHING.

First. Be a savour of Christ in your PRACTICE. Paul says to Timothy,—"Thou hast fully known," not only "my doctrine," but "manner of life." It was such as became the gospel; and adorned the doctrine of God our Saviour, in all things. He could appeal both to his hearers, and to his master: "Ye are witnesses, and God also, how holily, and justly, and unblamably we behaved ourselves among you." Allowing for those infirmities, which are inseparable from this weak state of flesh and blood, there are modern ministers, who could abide the same appeal. An accurate observer of character, now living, once said of the late excellent Cornelius Winter, "I am never in the company of that man, without feeling a paradisaiacal innocency." This was truly and finely said: yet it does not go far enough. Some of us in the presence of God, had the unspeakable privilege of being placed beneath his care, and of enjoying, for years, constant and unrestrained intercourse with him. We know the full meaning of the eulogium I have quoted; and we know more. If we may judge from our own feelings, it was impossible to be with him, and not feel—"A savour of Christ:" and not secretly exclaim—Here is a Christian!—How lovely is a Christian!—O that I was a Christian! He was an image of the gospel he preached: and those who refused to hear his sermons, were constrained to read them; for they were all legibly written in his life. In the neighbourhood in which he lived, and died, the savour still continues; and will live as long as the memories of those who knew him.

Example is instructive and impressive, even in private life; but how important is it in public stations, where it is more open to observation, and is required to give weight and sanction to useful endeavours. Official piety, unsustained and unenlivened by personal, leaves a man but as sounding brass, and a tinkling cymbal. I have heard of a minister of whom it was said—When in the pulpit, he preached so well, that it was a pity he ever left it; and when out of it, he lived so ill, that it was a pity he ever entered it. Even angelical preaching, connected with irreligious living, is infinitely more likely to prejudice and injure the cause of Christ than to serve it. "Thou knowest his will, and approvest the things that are more excellent, being instructed out of the law; and art confident that thou thyself art a guide of the blind, a light of them which are in darkness, an instructor of the foolish, a teacher of babes, which hast the form of knowledge and of the truth in the law. Thou therefore which teachest another, teachest thou not thyself? thou that preachest a man should not steal, dost thou steal? Thou that sayest a man should not commit adultery, dost thou commit adultery? thou that abhorrest idols, dost thou commit sacrilege? thou that makest thy boast of the law, through breaking the law dishonourest thou God?"

How lamentable is it when ministers are proud, and fall into the condemnation of the

devil; when they are fierce and contentious, instead of being gentle towards all men; when they are eager to gain titles, and to be called rabbi, instead of seeking the honour that cometh from God only; when they lord it over God's heritage, and are greedy of filthy lucre, instead of being ensamples to the flock—I need not say, "Thou, O man of God, flee these things; and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness. Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses." Cultivate not only the constituent, but the ornamental parts of the Christian character. Think upon, and pursue, not only whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, but—whatsoever things are lovely, and—whatsoever things are of good report. Let not the commendation you acquire be made up of mere negatives. It is the affliction of the church, when all that can be said of her officers is, that they are not as other men are. Be not only blameless and harmless, but exemplary and impressive, holding forth the word of life. Let your temper and actions betray your intimacies, and lead people to take knowledge of you, that you have been with Jesus. Let the master be seen in the dispositions and conduct of the servant. Let the accurateness of the copy bring to mind the original, and serve to endear *Him*, who pleased not himself; who was meek and lowly in heart; who went about doing good; who mourned with friends: who wept over enemies; and who could say, even of his obedience unto death, "My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work." "Let the same mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus."

Secondly, Be a savour of Christ in your CONVERSATION. "All thy works shall praise thee, O Lord; and thy saints shall bless thee. They shall speak of the glory of thy kingdom, and talk of thy power; to make known to the sons of men his mighty acts, and the glorious majesty of his kingdom. They shall abundantly utter the memory of thy great goodness, and shall sing of thy righteousness." Is this to be verified in Christians only? And are ministers to be silent upon a subject, always important, always necessary, unless when they are declaiming in the sanctuary? How many opportunities of an occasional and private nature, have they, to speak of "those things which concern the Lord Jesus;" when, though the audience be small, the instruction is more appropriate, and the impression is often more durable.

Will you permit me to remark, that there is room for improvement among us in this article. It is to be feared, that there is frequently less serious conversation when some ministers are present, than when they are absent. Our forefathers in the sacred office, were grave and useful in their social intercourse; and men of God in the pulpit, were not buffoons in the parlour. They *laboured*, and we are entered into their labours. Think of their self-denial, their early risings, their strenuous diligence, their long and profound and exhausting applications—see their proficiencies—look over the catalogue of their works—take down their quartos and folios. If such men had erred a little on the side of conversational freedom, candour might have derived some excuse from the necessity of unbending their minds, and indulging a flow of spirits in the family, and friendly circle when "scaped from literary cares." But few of our young ministers are likely to become martyrs to intellectual exertion. Their reading is often cursory, their preparations superficial, and the time spent in their study, inconsiderable. For *such*, a great deal of mental relaxation is not surely necessary. To find *them* indulging, in lengthened repose in the morning, stretching at length on the sofa, and compelled to have recourse to light and jocular conversation, to relieve *their minds* from the intensity of application, would, if the thing could be viewed abstractedly, create a smile. I am not pleading for dulness; I am no enemy to cheerfulness. I love a touch of fancy, and a stroke of wit, and a well-told anecdote, especially if some profit can be extracted from the entertainment it affords. But I would say to a young minister (here I am happy my dear brother to avow, that I make you the occasion, and not the subject of address) I would say to a young minister—Do not affect drollery. Attempt not incessantly to excite diversion. Utter nothing that tries the moral feelings of any who hear you. Especially beware of turning into ridicule, the imperfections of some of your brethren, who are, perhaps, much worthier than yourself, though not so highly gifted, or well educated. Delight not to satirize every infirmity of ignorant and illiterate people, before children and servants, who, not accurately distinguishing, between the circumstances, and the substance of a thing, may infer you are not very friendly to religion itself. Remember that in moral soil, as well as in the material, some things must, for *a while*, be tolerated for the sake of others; lest in plucking up the tares, you root up also the wheat with them—every moment is not the time of harvest. Consider it, not as a commendation, but rather as a censure, to be celebrated for oddity and merriment. Be not the monkey and the fiddle of the company. Remember, there is such a text, if you can never dare to preach from it, as "Foolish talking and jesting which is not convenient."

Let nothing degrade you into the trifler.

Support in private, the reputation you gain in public. Maintain cheerfulness without levity, and ease without familiarity. Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good, to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers. Take notice of seasons, of events, of the rumours of the day, of the circumstances of the place, to introduce the one thing needful; and resolve, that wherever you are found, and have opportunity to be heard, *He* shall not be forgotten, who died for you and rose again. Indeed, if the word of Christ dwells in you richly in all wisdom, and you have an affluence of Christian experience as well as knowledge, a remark which you will often apply to your people as an holy criterion of their state, will be exemplified in yourself, "Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh." Your ordinary discourse will not only correspond with your office, but co-operate with it; the social companion will be an assistant preacher to the pastor; and like Paul, you will not only teach Jesus Christ in the temple, but from house to house.

Thirdly. Be a savour of CHRIST in your PREACHING. Are there none, whose Discourses savour more of Plato, and Seneca, and Socrates, and Xenophon, than of the worthy name by which we are called?—Are there none whose sermons abound with worldly politics, angry controversies, curious criticisms, ingenious remarks, and *merely* moral reflections, rather than with the doctrine of salvation by the cross and the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ? If ever He is referred to, is it not in a way of cold reserve, or indirect allusion?

We hear much in our day of Antinomians. Such I am persuaded there are. We frequently meet with those who have grown wanton in evangelical privileges, and use their liberty as a cloak of maliciousness, and not as the servants of God. Of such, we need not be afraid to speak, in scriptural language. They are *ungodly men* that turn the grace of our God into lasciviousness. We ought to show our disapprobation of those, whose sentiments professedly degrade the law of God as a rule of life; treat holiness and good works as no more the evidences and effects of salvation, than the cause of it; and not only deny, but ridicule the reality and progress of a work of grace in the heart. From such withdraw thyself. But I dare not set down every one as deserving this reproach, who incurs the name. We ought to consider much, from whom the charge comes: for it may so happen, that the censured are deemed excessive, because the censurers are themselves defective. And I cannot but fear, lest some of our younger and less experienced brethren, in avoiding one extreme, run into another: and from a laudable concern to guard the truths of the gospel, impoverish them; and feed their flock in such poor and sparing pasture, as to tempt them to break bounds, and enter the rank grasses of these pseudo-doctrinalists. Your admonisher this morning, mentions this the more readily, because he remembers a time when he erred a little in this direction himself; and he is not ashamed to confess, that there are, of his earlier sermons, such as he could not conscientiously preach again; not because they were not consistent with the "truth as it is in Jesus," or did not even imply it, but because, according to his present views, they did not fully express it, and sufficiently make manifest the savour of his knowledge.

A young divine, says Manton, one day asked an old Christian, "What shall I preach?" He received for answer, "Preach Christ." "O, I have preached him," says he, "already." "Why then," added the sage, "Preach him again: preach him always: and preach him only." This is advice, which, however lightly some may treat it now, all these worthies would have sanctioned, whose works praise them in the gate. The time would fail me to tell of Leighton, and Hall, and Owen, and Baxter, and Reynolds, and Howe, and Charnoch, and Polhill, and Bates, and Watts, and Doddridge, and numbers more, who were for nothing more remarkable than a rich, full, and consistent display of the Lord Jesus. They proclaimed him, in the dignity of his person; in the glory of his character; in the condescension of his grace; in the wonders of his love; in the efficacy of his sufferings; in the prevalency of his intercession; in his ability to save to the uttermost them that come unto God by him. They preached him, as the only foundation of a sinner's hope; as the Lord our righteousness and strength; as the consolation of Israel, in whom they were to rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory: and to use the expression of one of them, "Christ was the diamond in the bosom of all their sermons." And what was the practice of the apostles? "We preach Christ crucified," says Paul, "to the Jews a stumbling-block, and to the Greeks foolishness; but unto them that are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the wisdom of God and the power of God. Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men." "I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ and him crucified." "God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ." Accordingly, he viewed and explained, and improved every thing in relation to *him*. If he spake of the glory of God, he represented it as "shining forth in the face of Jesus Christ." If he mentioned the promises of God, they were all yea and amen in Christ Jesus. If he adverted to the duties and difficulties of the Christian

life, he said, "Be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus:" "I can do all things through Christ who strengtheneth me." He could not enforce even conjugal tenderness without a reference the most affecting: "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it." May we all follow an example so worthy of imitation; and whenever in our work, we pause for reflection, may our consciences, bearing witness in the Holy Ghost, enable *us* also to say, "Whom *we* preach, warning every man and teaching every man, in all wisdom, that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus."

But, that you may be a savour of Christ, there must be a regard to the *manner*, as well as the *subject* of your preaching. The poet, in speaking of government, has said,

"Whate'er is best administer'd is best."

The same may be nearly said with regard to sermons. There is not such a marvellous difference between the thoughts and arrangements of one preacher, and another, as some imagine. But, who has not been struck with the difference of the impression, and effect? One man shall speak; and how dry, and sapless, and uninteresting is he! Let another deliver the very same things, and there is a savour that gives them freshness: the things seem perfectly new. To know how to acquire this, is a secret which I hope you are acquainted with. It is to live out of the spirit of the world, and to walk much with God alone; it is to keep conscience alive and awake; it is to maintain a deep sense of the value of the soul, and the importance of eternal salvation; it is to keep the mind in the things of God by habitual meditation; it is to cherish the devotional affections; it is to speak from the heart, to speak experimentally, to speak under a mixture of solemn and tender feelings; it is to speak with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven, in answer to strong cryings and tears—When such a man, and under such an influence, engages in his work, he enters his congregation, as Aaron went into the tabernacle to minister, when the precious ointment had been poured upon his head, and ran down to the skirts of his garment: he is found, before he is either seen or heard: and we think of our Christian bard—

When one that holds communion with the skies
Has fill'd his urn, where these pure waters rise,
And once more mingles with us meaner things,
'Tis e'en as if an angel shook his wings.
Immortal fragrance fills the circuit wide,
That tells us whence *his* treasures are supplied.
So when a ship well-freighted with the stores
The sun matures on India's spicy shores,
Has dropp'd her anchor, and her canvass furl'd,
In some safe haven of our western world;
'Twere vain inquiring to what port she *went*,
The *gale* informs us, laden with the *scent*.

II. Ministers of the gospel are VARIOUSLY REGARDED. We may consider them as sustaining a three-fold relation. We may view them, with regard to GOD with regard to THOSE THAT PERISH; and with regard to THOSE THAT ARE SAVED. To God, they are A SWEET SAVOUR OF CHRIST. To them that perish, they are a DEADLY savour. To them that are saved, they are a VITAL savour. "To the one, we are the savour of death unto death, and to the other, we are the savour of life unto life!" Let us reverse this order, and consider ministers,

First, In relation to them that are "saved." To these they are the savour of LIFE UNTO LIFE. They are not only instruments of quickening them, when dead in trespasses and sins, but of sustaining, and increasing every vital principle, when produced. For such ministers appear in the name, and officiate on the behalf of him who said, "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly."

Christianity in the soul, is a progressive thing: and the dispensation of the word, is the principal means by which believers go from strength to strength;" are "renewed day by day;" are "changed from glory into glory."

The grand subject of the ministry enlivens them in duty, revives them in depression, and supports them under all their trials. Dr. Watts has beautifully expressed it—

The vital savour of his name
Restores their fainting breath,
While unbelief perverts the same
To guilt, despair, and death.

—When pressed down by a recollection of past guilt, and a sense of present unworthiness and imperfections, they are only kept from utter despondency, by hearing that, "we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous, and he is the propitiation for our sins." The pollution of their holy things would deprive them of all peace and confidence in approaching God: but they "have boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which he has consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh."

Harassed with the cares, and worn down with the toils of the day, the poor labourer repairs in the evening to the house of God, (and there ought to be a week-day lecture in every place, especially for the sake of those whose hearing is their chief religious resource) he repairs to the sanctuary: and what can refresh him there? What can *interest* him? What can make him, for a moment, forget the low scenes of earth, and feel a new creature? What can make him return home with delight, and enter again into his allotted course with cheerful resignation? It is "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, who, though he was rich yet for our sakes became poor, that we, through his poverty, might be rich." Take the Christian in circumstances still

more trying; and behold him after a week of penury, hardship, and trouble, hailing an *evangelical* Sabbath:

> Though pinch'd with poverty at home,
> With sharp afflictions daily fed,
> It makes amends if they can come,
> To God's own house for heavenly bread.
>
> How happy, if their lot is cast
> Where statedly the *gospel* sounds;
> The word is honey to their taste,
> Renews their strength, and heals their wounds.
>
> With joy they hasten to the place,
> Where they their Saviour oft have met,
> And while they feast upon his *grace*,
> Their burdens and their griefs forget.

And long as this quotation is, I cannot help adding;—

> This happy lot, my friends, is your's,
> May you the privilege improve,
> And find these consecrated hours,
> Sweet earnests of the joys above.

It is thus, that Christians are "strengthened with all might by his spirit in the inner man:" that "Christ dwells in their hearts by faith:" that "being rooted and grounded in love, they are able to comprehend with all saints, what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height: and to know the *love of Christ*, which passeth knowledge," and are "filled with *all the fulness of God*." Thus, they are led, from one degree of divine life to another; from the life of religious infancy, to the life of manhood; from the life of desire, to that of possession; from the life of hope, to that of the full assurance of hope; from the life of grace, to the life of glory.

For at length, the minister is called to attend his charge, in their last remove. The honour of religion, and the encouragement of others, as well as their own comfort, make him long, that those whom he has watched through this vale of tears, may finish their course with joy! And what can make the saints joyful in glory, and enable them to shout aloud upon their dying bed? Does he draw a comparison in their favour, between them and others? Does he tell them, how inconsiderable their failings have been, if set against their excellencies? Does he call upon them to look back upon a well-spent life?

This would only drive them to despair. Indeed they are too well taught of God to accept of such consolation, if it were offered. If they feel a confidence, it is as humble as it is holy: it is derived from another source. "I cannot say I have so lived," said Marshal when dying, "that I am not afraid to die; but I can say, I have so learned Christ, that I am not afraid to die."

And this is the subject to which the minister of the gospel turns the believer's attention, amidst the decays of nature; and with which he animates him, when "his heart and his flesh faileth." He does not run with the crucifix in his hand; but he shows him the cross. He cries, "Behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world:" he makes "mention of his righteousness only;" he talks of a Saviour, who "died." that we may "sleep;" who has undertaken to answer for us in the great day of account; who is gone before "to prepare a place for us," and is engaged to "come again, and receive us unto himself; that where he is, there we may be also."

This is the glory that irradiates the dark valley. This is the odour that sheds a fragrance in a dying room, and in a dying soul. This is the sound, O Christian, that will answer the prayer you have so often sung,

> And may the music of his name
> Refresh my soul in death.

Let us consider ministers,

Secondly, In relation to them that "perish." To these, they are the savour of DEATH UNTO DEATH. The meaning is, that they not only find them dead, but leave them so—yea, leave them—more so. They are the occasion of adding to their spiritual death; and of enhancing their eternal.

Let me open a little, this awful part of our subject. It would be easy to prove that punishment will be answerable to guilt: but guilt is aggravated by advantages neglected or abused. Upon this principle, the Jews were more criminal than the surrounding nations, and therefore were more severely threatened: "You only have I known of all the families of the earth; therefore, you will I punish." "To him," says the apostle James, "that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin;" which means, not only or principally, that omission of duty is a sin, as really as positive transgression; but that the guilt of the one, as well as the other, is increased by knowledge. "If," says our Saviour, "I had not come and spoken among them, they had not had sin:" *i. e.* comparatively; "but now have they no cloak for their sin:" *i. e.* they are left stripped of all excuse. "The servant which knew his lord's will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes. But he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes. For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required: and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more." And again: "This is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil."

Whom should the conclusion to be drawn from these premises, alarm?—If,—as an old writer says—there are many mansions in hell, as well as in heaven, "What shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God?" You talk of heathens: but they never heard the name of the Saviour, and, having had no testimony to reject, come not within the reach of the tremendous sentence, "He

that believeth not shall be damned." Leave them, and think of yourselves. You have often heard, with a shivering horror, of the fate of Sodom. The inhabitants were "sinners above all men before the Lord:" and he would not suffer them to be buried, lest their wretched bodies should pollute the rottenness of the grave, but consumed them; and "They are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire." But perhaps, my dear brother, some of your hearers may hereafter exclaim, O that I had been born in Sodom! O that I had perished three thousand years earlier! O that by a profusion of Divine, but unsanctified privileges, I had never drawn upon myself a far more intolerable doom! Is this talking extravagance; or preaching up imaginary terror? What was the language of our Lord himself, to those that enjoyed, but misimproved his preaching? "And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted unto heaven, shalt be cast down to hell; for if the mighty works, which have been done in thee, had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day. But I say unto you, That it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment, than for thee."

Did you never observe the words of the apostle to the Hebrews? He is not content to ask, "How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation!" But mark his language —"He that despised Moses' law, died *without mercy:*" observe the expression—*without mercy!* "under two or three witnesses: of how much *sorer* punishment" (what sorer than dying without mercy!) "of how *much* sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of Grace?" You have read of the devil and his angels. Did Christ take upon him their nature? Did he die for them! Was pardon, was holiness ever offered to them? No: and therefore they have never been rejected—by them. No: this super-Satanic guilt lies only at your door. Perhaps, my dear brother, some of your hearers may hereafter exclaim, O that I had been a fallen angel! O that before the creation of the world, I had been cast down to hell, and confined in chains of darkness against the judgment of the great day! Any chain had been a blessing, that could have kept me from *that* place of worship! Even hell would have proved a privilege, had it prevented me from sitting under *that* minister!

I long to leave this part of my subject; but I must remark, That nothing tends to confirm our faith in the Scriptures more, than, a comparison of what we see with what we read. How often do we find unholy attendants on the gospel, after a while, falling into the greatest errors or the vilest crimes: sometimes, they become persecutors; and instances are not wanting, in which they have ended their wretched days, in frenzy or desperation. But where they still retain a decency of character, and do not abandon the means of grace, they grow easy and insensible, and are rarely ever awakened. For, what can impress those, who have contrived to sit out the contents of the Bible, a thousand times over? They are like birds, born and bred in a belfry, which start not, nor move a wing at sounds which would stun strangers. Some of this hopeless obduracy is unquestionably a natural effect; the consequence of long familiarity with divine things, trifling with convictions, and resisting conscience: but there is also a degree of penal judgment in it: for God can as really punish by withholding a salutary and necessary influence, as by any positive infliction: and thus fulfil that tremendous declaration, repeated no less than four times in the Scripture: "Go unto this people, and say, Hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and not perceive: for the heart of this people is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes have they closed; lest they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them." But let us consider ministers,

Thirdly, In relation to God, who sends them, and to whom they are responsible. To Him they are a SWEET SAVOUR OF CHRIST; and a sweet savour of Christ BOTH IN THEM THAT ARE SAVED, AND IN THEM THAT PERISH. He accepts them and delights in them, not only when a subject opens to their minds, but when (unless they have been negligent) it seems impenetrable to their attempt; not only when they preach with fluency and pleasure, but when (unless they have been inattentive to means) they are pained with embarrassment, and ashamed, as they come down, to look their hearers in the face: not only when they add to the church characters the most hopeful; but when, with bleeding hearts they exclude disorderly members: not only when they approach God at the head of a list of converts, saying, "Behold, the children thou hast given me," but when they retire into their closets, and at his feet exclaim, "Lord, who hath believed our report!"

Success is desirable. Who loves to toil in vain! Who loves to plant, and water, and see no increase?—And in general, God blesses his servants with some considerable degree of usefulness. But a useful ministry is not necessary, to a valid one. Our Saviour himself preached with very little effect: "I said I have laboured in vain; I have spent my strength for nought and in vain:" "Yet," he adds, "yet surely my judgment is with the

Lord, and my work with my God." And so may every minister say, under discouraging appearances. We serve a good master: he does not make us answerable for success: he knows infinitely better than we do, that conversion is his own prerogative, and does not depend upon us. Duty only is ours; and even with regard to this, he allows us to depend upon him for ability to discharge it; and in estimating our services, he admits into the account, not only all we do; but all we try to do, and wish to do, but in which we are hindered; and says, "It was well that it was in thy heart." The language of promise is, "Be thou *faithful* unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life." We go further; we are persuaded that there are many cases in which ministers are dearer to God in their disappointments than in their successes. It is pleasant to labour when we succeed; and there is always some danger, lest pride should mix with our pleasure, and, while we acknowledge God to be the author, we should feel some little importance at least, in being the instruments. The trial of principle is to labour *without* success. To bear the burden and heat of the day without murmuring; to abide at our post under every temptation to leave it; to say, If he is pleased to use me, I shall deem it an honour; but if he refuse me, I have no reason to complain: he has a right to choose his own instruments: to be willing to lay a foundation upon which another is to build; or to set well, as another rises, and without envy or regret, to say, "He must increase and I must decrease"—here is the true spirit of a servant—here is real greatness in the sight of the Lord—and such magnanimity shall not lose its reward.

I conclude with two reflections, forcibly derived from our subject.

First: WITH WHAT AWFUL IMPRESSIONS SHOULD MINISTERS PREACH! The office of a lawyer is important: he guards our property. The office of a physician is more important: he takes care of our health. But the office of a minister, is unspeakably the most important of all, because his concern lies with the soul. The consequences which flow from his labours, are the issues of life and death, spiritual life and death, eternal life and death! What feelings should precede, accompany, follow every sermon we deliver! Is there a minister here present, that can reflect for a moment upon the greatness of his work, and not exclaim—and it is the apostle's own inference—"Who is sufficient for these things?"

Secondly: WITH WHAT SOLEMN IMPRESSIONS SHOULD PEOPLE HEAR! Yet, alas! nothing in common, is so little reverenced, as preaching. With what a careless and thoughtless air, are persons seen entering the house of the Eternal, and leaving it! How seldom do hearers retire, and reflect, and pray, before they engage in the service of God—or even after! When do they listen under the word, with that fearful devoutness which would necessarily result from such a suggestion as this: "I shall be the better, or worse, for this exercise. It will leave me so much nearer heaven, or hell."

Many feel a kind of dread at the thought of an improper approach to the table of the Lord, having read, "He that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body." But do you never consider, that he who *hears* unworthily, exposes himself to no less a doom? Every unhallowed attendance on any of the means of grace, must issue in your aggravated sin and misery. You dread the removal of the gospel, and allow that the want of hearing the words of the Lord, would be a famine, worse than a famine of bread: but perhaps, you never reflect, that as the ministry may be withdrawn in wrath, it may also be continued in judgment: that as the loss of the means of salvation is dreadful, the continuance of them is much more so, when they become only the enhancements of guilt and condemnation: you have, perhaps, often prayed against being deprived of the faculty of hearing, but never prayed against losing the grace of hearing—but hearing may prove a greater curse than deafness.

O let me call upon you seriously to consider this with regard to yourselves: and suffer me to ask, What is your prospect, and what is your condition? Remember, First, That the word preached is never universally —some would say—never generally, successful. That, Secondly, it always operates in *some* way, and it is impossible to render it an efficient principle. It resembles Moses, who slew the Egyptian, and saved the Israelite. It is like the ark, that blessed the house of Obededom, and plagued the Philistines. It is an aliment, that nourishes, or poisons. It is a medicine, that kills, or cures. It is like the planet; sometimes the bright and morning star, ushering in the day; and sometimes the harbinger of night, drawing on the blackness of darkness for ever. Thirdly, There are but *two* classes of hearers; believers and unbelievers; children of wrath, or heirs of glory. To which of these do you belong? Here are great diversities of talent and condition; here are, male and female; old and young; masters and servants; rich and poor; the educated and the illiterate.—But the distinction of our text, enters and sees among you all, two divisions only. And what, if an angel, next Lord's-day, while you are worshipping, was to come down, and make the separation as visible as it is real. Suppose he should place *here*, on the right hand, those to whom the word is a savour of life: and *there*, on the left hand, those to whom it is

the savour of death. With what anxiety would the minister rise, and stand, and look down from this desk, and wait the discrimination. How would the hearts of religious friends and relations break, as they viewed the objects of their regard led away with the rejected. "There goes my brother—my sister—my parent—my child—my husband—my wife!"——What an unequal division! How small the one! how large the other! How different the result from previous conjecture and conviction! Some, who had feared to make a profession of religion, and hesitated to speak of the state of their souls, only lest they should have uttered what they never felt; who, for want of room to retire in, often took a more distant and solitary walk to the house of God, praying as they went, "Send us help from the sanctuary, and strengthen us out of Zion:" would rank safe and happy: while, joined to the lost, would be found some, who had attended the gospel from their infancy; some, who had often welcomed ministers to their table; perhaps members—perhaps officers of the church! But in which of these classes, I address you individually, would you be found? It is not indeed likely that such a discrimination will be made in this world. It does not comport with the wisdom of God's design. You will therefore continue externally blended for a season. But the awful hour is at hand, when the separation must be made, unerringly made, publicly made, irreversibly made. It is already obvious in the view of God. It is already actually commenced, commenced in the principles and dispositions which govern you, and in the manner in which you hear and receive the word. Again I ask, To which of these divisions do you belong? It is possible to determine. It is necessary. We press for a decision: and leave conscience to receive your reply.

THE HAND OF GOD IN AFFLICTIONS:

A SERMON

OCCASIONED BY

THE DEATH OF MISS ANN WHITCHURCH,

DELIVERED IN ARGYLE CHAPEL, BATH, OCTOBER 18, 1818.

BY WILLIAM JAY

ADVERTISEMENT.

THIS Sermon, which the Author, feeling a wish to improve an affecting event, preached without solicitation; he publishes entirely at request—the request of the relatives and the audience. It is to be feared that in the reading, it will want much of the impression which, from a number of auxiliary causes, it made in the hearing. He mentions this to account for probable disappointment—not by way of apology. The wishes of his friends are responsible for the Discourse, such as it is: to them he affectionately dedicates it, concerned only that indisposition and peculiar engagements prevented his performing this duty of friendship immediately. In coming from the press, it differs only as it came from the pulpit, in a little enlargement originally in the Author's design, but which he had not time to avail himself of, in the delivery.

Behold, he taketh away, who can hinder him? who will say unto him, what doest thou?—Job ix. 12.

MY BRETHREN, it always highly becomes us to entertain proper apprehensions of him "with whom we have to do." He is, indeed, "a God that hideth himself." "He dwelleth in the light which no man can approach unto, and him no man hath seen, or can see." There are heights, and depths, and breadths, and lengths in his essence, and attributes, and works, and ways, which elude all created, all finite research: and we may go to an archangel with the question Eliphaz addressed to Job: "Canst *thou* by searching find out God: canst thou find out the Almighty unto *perfection?*"

Are we then sealed up in total ignorance? Are we called to worship "an unknown God?" No: He has not left himself without witness. His word is "a lamp unto our path, and a light unto our feet." As far as our state requires information, He has given us a revelation of himself in this sacred volume; and it is both our duty and our privilege, to assume with thankfulness, and to hold with inviolable firmness, the views of the Supreme Being, it holds forth—for they will of necessity be fundamental in religion—and all our creed, all our conduct, and all our comfort must be affected by them.

His dispensations with regard to nations, families, and individuals, are various. In some of them he thunders; in others, we hear only a small still voice. Some of them call us to rejoice; others to mourn. Some enrich us; others impoverish. In some, He gives; in others, He takes away.—But He is the same in all; and all are worthy of our attention. If there be a difference, it is in favour of his more awful and painful dealings with us. *These* peculiarly deserve and demand our regard. In *these* he seems to move out of his common road, in order to awaken and impress the mind. Our food is intended to do us good—but how much more our medicine? When *this* is administered in vain, our case begins to be considered suspicious, alarming, desperate. There is nothing, therefore, by which we can more defy and provoke the God of the whole earth, than while he is employing methods so extraordinarily de-

signed and adapted to affect us, we "regard not the work of the Lord," neither consider the operation of his hand. "Hear ye, therefore," says the voice from heaven, "Hear ye the rod, and Him that hath appointed it." "In the day of adversity, consider." "Behold" Him in all he does; but most attentively and seriously contemplate Him when he comes *to take away.* "BEHOLD, HE TAKETH AWAY, WHO CAN HINDER HIM? WHO WILL SAY UNTO HIM, WHAT DOEST THOU?

It appears from this passage, that in the losses of life, we are to recognize and acknowledge—The truth of his agency—The uncontrolableness of his dominion—and—The unimpeachableness of his conduct.

The *truth of his agency*—"He taketh away."

The *uncontrolableness of his dominion*—"Who can hinder him?"

The *unimpeachableness of his conduct*—"Who will say unto him, What doest Thou?"

I. Behold, the *truth of his agency.* "He taketh away." It is obvious that our hold of every possession and enjoyment is very precarious, and that our comforts lie at the disposal of another. This conclusion depends not on reasonings; it results from facts: scripture is not necessary to teach it; all history, all observation, all experience proclaims it.

Wealth is often taken away. Men make gold their hope, and fine gold their confidence; but nothing is more precarious; they are therefore called, "uncertain riches;" and we are commanded not to "trust in them." How many after devising the best plans, and availing themselves of every assistance that could promise success, are groaning over their defeated projects—"My purposes are broken off, even the thoughts of my heart." How many are not only in embarrassments, but have their indigence imbittered by contrast with the plenty that once crowned their table.

Health is often taken away. "Let not the strong man glory in his strength." What is it against the decays of nature, the violence of accident, the corrosion of disease? "When Thou with rebukes dost correct man for iniquity, Thou makest his beauty to consume away like a moth; surely every man is vanity."

Reason is often taken away. No condition, however elevated, secures the possessor. Nebuchadnezzar's understanding departed from him; and in his fancies and feelings he was reduced to a level with the beasts that perish. How many in our own day in the higher, yea, in the highest ranks of life have become the victims of this dire calamity.

—And are not connexions and relatives often taken away? Is there a person in the presence of God, who has not had reason to sigh, "Lover and friend hast Thou put far from me, and mine acquaintance into darkness." It is needless to enlarge the illustration. It is undeniable that our possessions and comforts are holden by a very precarious tenure; and are removable at the pleasure of another.

And who is the disposer? Who is He that thus intermeddles with our affairs, and lays desolate our comforts. "Behold *He* taketh away." There is no such thing as chance in his empire. His providence is not only real but universal. "A sparrow falleth not to the ground without our heavenly Father; Yea, the very hairs of our head are all numbered."—"*Who* gave Jacob for a spoil, and Israel to the robbers? Did not *the Lord;* he against whom they have sinned?" War is called "*His* sword." He "calls for a famine upon the land," and "cleanness of teeth" stalks through. *He* "breaketh the ships of Tarshish with an east wind." "I clothe," says He, "the heavens with sackcloth," "I form the light and create darkness: I make peace and create evil: I the Lord do all these things." "Is there an evil in the city, and the Lord hath not done it?"

Not that God, in these cases always acts immediately—He commonly, if not invariably, works otherwise. In things purely spiritual, and where the result is so manifestly his own, he uses means to produce it. Paul plants and Apollos waters, though *He* giveth the increase, and worketh all in all. And thus it is in temporal things; instruments are employed: but instrumentality supposes and requires agency—and requires it, whatever ability or adaptation it possesses:—for however keen the sword, or excellent the pen, the one cannot wound, or the other write, without a hand to use it. All events, and all creatures, depend upon God; and they can neither bless or injure us, but as he permits, employs, succeeds them.

Hence too his interposition is not visible. He really does all, but *seems* to do nothing. His agency, though obvious enough in its results, is imperceptible in its working. Thus it is with the wind; we cannot see it pass, but we can see its passage, and trace the direction of its progress in its effects. Read the preceding verse: "Lo, he goeth by me, and I see him not; he passeth on also, but I perceive him not."

God rarely makes use of the marvellous, or acts so as to alter the regular and established order of things. His agency sometimes indeed resembles a torrent which sweeps over an unusual surface, and bears down cattle, and trees, and houses, and as it rolls and roars along, draws people to the margin with amazement and dismay: but he more commonly brings his designs to pass in a manner more slow and tranquil, and unobserved, resembling the flow of a river that keeps its own channel, and reaches its fulness by a course as natural as it is efficient. It is a fine image, the genius of Solomon employs,

when he says, "The king's heart is in the hand of the Lord, as the rivers of water: He turneth it whithersoever he will." The husbandman does not change the quality but the current of the stream: it still flows according to its natural propension, yet runs under his guidance, and in subserviency to his pleasure. Thus agents act of themselves; yet are his servants: they follow their own inclination, but fulfil his purposes. This fact misconceived, has led infidels to deny the providence of God in the events of the world; and even philosophers the most convinced of the existence of God, from the appearance of relations, beauties, and utilities in the parts of the universe, have disavowed the hand of God in the management of human affairs, believing that "time and chance happened to them all." The reason of the inconsistency seems to be this. In the fixed system of nature they see creatures acting in a constant and uniform manner; but these being purely passive in themselves, *must* be determined and conducted by a foreign power; and a presiding agency cannot be questioned. But in human life they meet with beings, who are masters of their own conduct, and act by knowledge and choice; possessing boundless liberty, and capricious dispositions; sometimes governed by principle, sometimes by example, sometimes by fancy, sometimes by pride, and sometimes by malice; and not able to distinguish between the first cause, and the subordinate issues; the chief agent and the instrument; the perfection of the Creator, and the weakness and folly of the creature; they adhere to the immediate and apparent principle of action, without ascending to God, who presides over all, inspiring the good, permitting the evil, and reducing the whole to his own pleasure.

And indeed if sense only was to be consulted, we should seldom think of God in the most trying occurrences. To find a cause for the affliction of Joseph, why need we go beyond the envy of his brethren? Or a reason for the cursing of David, why need we look further than the malignity of Shimei? Or a motive for the crucifixion of the Son of God, what want we more than the jealousy of the chief priests, and the wickedness of the Jews? Who at the first sight of all these, would not have ascribed them to human agency? Yet, "God sent me here," says Joseph, "to save much people alive." "God hath bidden him," says David. And, "He was delivered," says the apostle, "according to the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God."

It is necessary, therefore, to rise above sense, and to call in the aid of that faith which is not only "the substance of things hoped for," but "the evidence of things not seen." And this will be found to constitute the difference between the natural man and the Christian. The former is no better at heart than an atheist: he is without God in the world: God is not in all his thoughts. A Christian only is the true theist. He is the *only* firm and vital believer in the being and empire of God. But he *does* believe in them. He walks by faith, and not by sight. He is aspiring after a world, where "God is all in all," and to this state he is already in a measure come. He has begun to see, and hear, and realize God. He acknowledges Him in all his ways; and when others say, "O it was that unlucky accident; it was that unfortunate servant; it was that perfidious friend; it was that deadly enemy"—He cries with Eli, "It is the Lord," and endeavours to add, "Let *Him* do what seemeth him good." I pity the man who in the day of evil, is the wretch, of events without author or design; and finds himself left alone with a heartless world, with blind chance, with his own evil temper, and with the demons of impatience and unbelief.—The Christian feels himself still with God, "even his own God;" and his presence enlightens all that is gloomy, relieves all that is depressing; brings beauty out of confusion, and turns evil into good. Thus it was with Jesus who suffered for us, leaving us an example that we should follow his steps. He foreknew all the circumstances of his trial, and all the instruments of his pain—He saw Judas betraying him; Peter denying him; his disciples forsaking him; Herod mocking him; Pilate condemning him; the soldiers nailing him to the cross; the populace insulting him—He saw it all—yet he saw nothing but God: "The cup which MY FATHER hath given me, shall I not drink it?" We are to behold

II. The *uncontrolableness of his dominion.* —"Who can hinder Him?"

Can the man of power? There is no power but of God; and what he imparts, he can with infinite ease recall, or defeat.—What a degree of force and influence have some individuals possessed and exerted.—When the late emperor of France led his unparalleled army into Russia, he seemed more than mortal. He felt the presumption of confidence himself, for he said, "Are not my princes altogether kings, is not Calno as Carchemish?—Is not Hamath as Arpad?—Is not Samaria as Damascus?"—What can withstand him? "*He* sendeth abroad his ice like morsels. Who can stand before *his* cold?"—"How art thou fallen, O Lucifer, son of the morning!—How art thou cut down to the ground which didst weaken the nations! for thou saidest in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation in the sides of the north." We read of "an innumerable company of

angels," and they are called *his* mighty angels—

The least of which could wield these elements.

One of them in a single night entered the camp of Sennacherib, and destroyed an hundred and eighty-five thousand: another at midnight, passed through the whole land of Egypt, and slew in every house the first-born. —An insect in his hand would be omnipotent.—There have been four great monarchies in the world, and each of them for the time seemed too firmly established to be rooted up. But in vain the Babylonian said, I will keep my throne; the Persian, I will keep my state; the Macedonian, I will retain my glory; and the Roman, I will retain my dominion. He took them all away, and trampled them under foot as the mire in the street.

Can the man of policy? There have been persons endowed with extraordinary prudence and penetration. They have seen effects in their distant causes; they have detected the undeveloped designs of an adversary; and made them, as soon as they began to operate, the very means of effecting their own scheme. "But there is no wisdom, nor understanding, nor counsel against the Lord." "The wisdom of the world is foolishness with God; as it is written, He taketh the wise in their own craftiness. And again, the Lord knoweth the thoughts of the wise, that they are vain."

Can the man of prayer? Prayer has power with God. Prayer has sometimes met Him as Abigail met David, and induced him to put up his sword into its sheath. "Therefore he said, that he would destroy them, had not Moses, his chosen, stood before him in the breach, to turn away his wrath, lest he should destroy them."—But prayer, even prayer cannot avail, when the time to execute his judgments, yea the set time is come. "Though Moses and Samuel stood before me, yet my mind could not be toward this people: cast them out of my sight, and let them go forth." He answers prayer; but not so as to derange the system of nature, and the economy of Providence. He answers prayer—yet when he has been taking away, who has not tried its efficacy, and found its success limited to our support under the suffering, but not affording exemption from it.

Can the hearer? Strong is the regard we feel for the man who has "begotten us in Christ by the gospel," who has fed us with "the bread of life;" who has led us "in the way everlasting;" and comforted us in all our tribulation. But in vain we hang upon his lips. Those lips must be silenced in the grave.—How many ministers, regardless of the tears of a church, raised by their labours, and apparently depending upon their ability and zeal, have been taken away in the vigour of their days, and the midst of their usefulness. Moses, the servant of the Lord must die: and all they among whom Paul has gone preaching the kingdom of God, must see his face no more.—Who can hinder him?

—Cannot the wife—the children? Cannot they hinder the removal of the husband, the father—cannot they hinder it, when the loss will reduce *her* from ease to anxiety, and toil, and dependence; and scatter *them* abroad uneducated, unprovided for, exposed to injustice and treated with insult? No. "Leave thy fatherless children: I will preserve them alive, and let thy widows trust in me."—Who can hinder him?

Cannot the lover? There is something very delightful and interesting in virtuous affection. "Marriage is honourable in all;" and God himself has pronounced that "it is not good for man to be alone."—He who has sanctioned the end, arranges the means.—We see each other; we intermingle—some personal charm; some intellectual or moral attraction; some undefined, undefinable quality, perhaps imperceptible to another, seizes and fixes the admirer's mind—we give up ourselves to the impression—and the time of union is reckoned upon, as the consummation of happiness.

—— What is the world to them?
Its pomp, its pleasures and its nonsense all
Who in each other clasp whatever fair
High fancy forms, and lavish hearts can wish;
Something than beauty dearer—should they look
Or on the mind, or mind illumined face,
Truth, goodness, honour, harmony, and love,
The richest bounty of indulgent Heaven.—

But alas, instead of marriage rites, behold funeral solemnities!—Who can hinder Him?

Can the husband? The husband ought to feel much more attached than the lover. To him, the companion of his days has actually surrendered herself—For him she has passed through pains and perils—She lives but for him, and those dear pledges of affection which bear his name, and his image.—Her worth he has tried, and proved and acknowledged.—

O happy they! the happiest of their kind [blend:
Whose hearts, whose fortune, and whose beings
'Tis not the coarser ties of human laws
Unnatural oft, and foreign to the mind
That binds their peace: but harmony itself
Attuning all their passions into love.
There friendship sweet exerts her softest power
Perfect esteem, enlivened by desire
Ineffable and sympathy of soul:
Thought meeting thought, and will preventing will
With boundless confidence—for nought but love
Can answer love, and render bliss *secure?*

—And can *this?* "Son of man behold I take from thee the desire of thine eyes with a stroke—and behold at evening my wife died."

But cannot parents? "Lo! children are an heritage of the Lord, and the fruit of the womb is his reward." We view them as our treasures, and say to each inquirer, "These are the children which God hath graciously given thy servant." With a joy which

strangers intermeddle not with, we see them "growing in wisdom and in stature." Every day some latent power or quality seems to unfold itself. We watch the tottering steps till they become a walk; and listen to their lisping, till with distinctness they can cry "My father and my mother." We look forward and indulge in the fondness of hope, and the visions of fancy. We expect to find in them, our companions, the ornaments of our family, the support of our age, and the hands that shall close the eyes that first sparkled on them with pleasure.—But while we are exceeding glad because of the gourd, some worm is preying at the root—and after a few months or years, we turn to the common spoiler, and say, "Me hast thou bereaved of my children; Joseph is not; and Simeon is not—and wilt thou take Benjamin away—all these things are against me."

III. We are to *contemplate the unimpeachableness of his conduct!* Who will say unto Him, what doest Thou? He is not to be arraigned, or argued with, or examined. —To restrain a man however from all this freedom with God, a threefold conviction is necessary: a conviction of his supremacy: a conviction of his rectitude: and a conviction of his wisdom.

First. A conviction of his *supremacy.* A father may come upon a child and say what doest thou? But does it become a child to say this to a parent? Seeing your servant at work in the field or the garden, you have surely a right to interrogate *him:* but what would you think if he should in like manner question *you?* "Where the word of a king is, there is power, and who can say unto Him, what doest *Thou?* With regard, indeed to an earthly king, this reasoning may be pushed too far; and it often *has* been abused by courtiers, and the advocates for non-resistance and passive obedience; who consider a king as incapable of doing wrong, or amenable to God only for his doings. But a king is for his people. When he speaks *the law,* he speaks as a king, and his orders are to be obeyed, and not to be disputed or debated. But when he speaks against law or above it, he only speaks as a man, and his mandates are no longer unquestionable. But God is a Sovereign, in such a sense, as no mortal either is, or can be. We are absolutely and entirely his: and He has a right to do what he will with his own. "Be still," therefore, says He, "and know that I am God." This was the consideration by which David hushed his passions into silence: "I was dumb; I opened not my mouth, because Thou didst it."

Secondly. A conviction of his *rectitude.* The sovereignty of God is never to be confounded with arbitrariness. Whatever He does, He does it "because it seemeth *good* in his sight." He feels no evil bias, and forms no design but infinite purity and benevolence approve. He is holy in all ways, and righteous in all his works. Even when He strips me, He does not defraud. He comes, not as a robber, but as a proprietor only, to reclaim his own. "I know that his judgments are right, and that in faithfulness He afflicts me." "Is there unrighteousness with God? How then can God judge the world? Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?"

Thirdly. A conviction of his *wisdom.* A man may mean well, and scorn to do an unworthy action, yet, he may err: he may be weak; he may be imposed upon by appearances; he may be drawn aside by artifice, and thus be guilty of very foolish, hazardous, and injurious conduct. Let the ability of a fellow-creature be what it may, it is always limited, and imperfect; and therefore I can never give him such *implicit* confidence as precludes the propriety or necessity of investigation. But such confidence in God is more than justified, because his understanding is infinite. He knows what is good in the circumstances as well as in the event: He knows what is best upon the whole, and in the end. "The eyes of the Lord run to and fro, throughout the whole earth, to show himself strong in the behalf of those whose heart is perfect towards him."

> "Who so fit to choose our lot,
> And regulate our ways."

It is therefore needless, presumptuous, dishonourable to say unto Him, "what doest Thou."

But perhaps you are ready to say—Has this prohibition no bounds, no qualification? Must we be kept, while God is dealing with us, in absolute ignorance, and silence? In answer to this, we have four remarks to make, to which we invite your renewed attention.

First remark. *You would not be often capable of understanding the subject, even were God to tell you, "what he doeth."* Vain man would be wise, but he is born as a wild ass's colt. We are of yesterday, and know nothing. We have only a small degree of intellect: and this is diverted and engrossed; limited in the sphere of its activity; and bounded by sense and reflection. We cannot know, where we have no ideas; and in many cases we have very imperfect ones, or none at all. What marvel then if God's doings are often too remote for us to reach; too deep for us to fathom; too complicated for us to unravel. Such knowledge is too wonderful for us: and it would be useless for God to impart to us communications which we have not faculties to admit. He therefore does with us, as we do with our children. They are often inquisitive, but we divert them from the subject. We know that we cannot at present enable them to comprehend the

nature, the bearings, relations, and design of our conduct, especially in our most weighty and complex concerns: that is, in those affairs wherein our wisdom is principally exercised. And we know who hath said, "O the depths, both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways are past finding out!"

Second remark. *There may be useful reasons for withholding from you the degree of knowledge which you are competent to receive.* The former article regards you physically; this morally; that regards your intellectual capacity, this your religious probation and improvement. It is well known that a veil left upon the subject, will serve to awaken attention and reverence; for such is the nature of man, that familiarity breeds neglect and contempt; while distance genders awe, and excites desire. Nothing was so revered by the Jews as the ark that was not to be touched, and the holiest of all that was forbidden to be entered. The sun is never so much noticed as when eclipsed.—It may be necessary to keep us in suspense, to try our faith; for the homage of faith is superseded by perfect knowledge. The grand proof of our confidence is, when we "walk in darkness, and have no light," to "trust in the Lord, and stay upon our God." Am I willing to follow Him, when he leads me, as blind in a way which I know not, and in paths which I have not known? Am I a son of Abraham, who at the call of God obeyed, and "went out, not knowing whither he went!"—Such concealment also promotes our humility. Man fell from his happiness by the desire of knowing; and he can only rise by the humility of his understanding, "casting down imaginations, and every thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ!"

Third remark. *An appointed hour is approaching when the restraints you are now under will be taken off; and your inquiries will be fully allowed and indulged.* The present is a world of action rather than of science. This life is a state of trial and preparation; the life to come, is for remuneration and happiness. For this reason we shall know infinitely more than we now know, as well as enjoy infinitely more than we now enjoy. The developements of eternity will constitute no small part of the glory to be revealed. We therefore rejoice in hope. "For we know in part, and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away.—For now we see through a glass darkly, but then face to face: for now I know in part, but then shall I know even as also I am known." "What I do," says God, "thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter."

Fourth remark. *Some inquiry is permitted you, even now;* Yes—If you will speak with modesty and diffidence—If you will not arraign his character—If you will not impeach his supremacy, his rectitude, his wisdom—If you will not inquire from any suspicion of his wonderfulness in counsel and excellency in working—or from idle curiosity—but from a regard to your advantage—to regulate your duty—to guide your godly sorrow—to know what he would have you to do, or forsake: you may even now ask, "What doest thou?" and Eliphaz himself recommends you to do so; "I would say unto God, do not condemn me, show me wherefore Thou contendest with me."

Now of that which we have spoken, this is the sum.

As any of your comforts may be taken away, set not your hearts upon them. This will be found not only the dictate of piety, but prudence. Excessive attachment is the way to lose our enjoyments the sooner, because it adds a moral precariousness to the natural: for it provokes God to slay the idols which rob him of that glory, which he has declared he will not give to another. Therefore as snow remains longer in a cool place than in the sun beams, so all our temporal indulgences are more durable in the region of moderate regard, than in the warmth of ardent affection.—By this intemperate attachment too, you render the removal the more difficult and painful when it comes. What we hold at our fingers' ends we can easily drop: but the tearing away of the heart-strings is death.

Again. *We see what alone it is in our afflictions that can reconcile the mind to them.* It is a view of God; and a view of Him, not only as a sovereign, but a Father. A view of His power will do something: it will show us the vanity of resistance, and induce us to say, "This is my grief and I *must* bear it." But the submission of a Christian is not the offspring of necessity, or compulsion. It is acquiescence. It is not enough that he does not strive with God—He must forgive him—He must take all he does in good part—He must approve—He must in every thing give thanks: feeling a lively persuasion not only that he is doing all things, but doing all things well. This is a frame of mind that allows indeed of sensibility, but excludes all censure. "Then Job arose and rent his mantle, and shaved his head, and fell down upon the ground and worshipped: and said, naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither. The Lord gave and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord. In all this Job sinned not, nor charged God foolishly."

The subject I have imperfectly explained and improved, cannot be deemed unsuitable to any of my audience, for we live in a world of changes; and "If a man live many years," says Solomon, "and rejoice in them all, yet let him remember the days of darkness, for they shall be many: all that cometh is vanity." But it has been peculiarly designed for those who are again called to sigh,

> The dear delights we here enjoy,
> And fondly call our own:
> Are but short favours borrowed now
> To be repaid anon.

—*They* have not only been bereaved, but visited with breach upon breach. A year has not elapsed since God entered the house of mourning, and by the death of the never to be forgotten head of the household, required a most important and painful sacrifice of the family; and in which the church, the pastor, the Sunday-schools, the poor, the neighbourhood, and the public suffered along with them.*

And behold again He taketh away. He has now removed, not only a fellow-creature, but a fellow-hearer and worshipper, whose place—*there*—which once knew her, shall know her no more for ever. She has been removed—in the bloom of life—lovely in person, more lovely in mind—most lovely in temper. Her disposition was peculiarly kind and obliging; her manners gentle, unaffected, and elegant; and her filial attachment and devotedness most exemplary. It is indeed to be presumed, that the poignancy of her feelings upon the loss of her honoured father, injured her delicate frame, and accelerated and promoted the complaint of which she died.

She was not suddenly taken away, but by a slow, and often flattering disease, which gradually undermined her constitution. And this was in mercy. It afforded a lengthened opportunity of developing and maturing those principles which had been previously implanted in her. Yes, the heavenly seed was sown before—And I had such a persuasion of this, that I proposed her admission to the table of the Lord. That timidity, however, which generally accompanies sincerity, made her shrink back from a profession of religion. But though never admitted a member of a church on earth, she has entered the church of the first-born, whose names are written in heaven, and joined the spirits of just men made perfect. And I have frequently imagined the pleasing interview between the father and the child in that world of renewed and finished friendship: and have thought how much more advantageously she is disposed of, to be under the wing of a parent in heaven, than a parent on earth. Free from infirmity, and care, and trouble, how much more able is the Father in heaven to devote himself to her improvement and happiness, than the mother on earth!

—I said, the heavenly seed had been sown before: But the lingering illness; the retirement from the world; the sheltered leisure; the intercourse of sacred friendship; and above all, the presence, the conversation, the prayers, of a pious parent—these were the showers that made the seed spring up, and in a short time to grow abundantly, "first the blade, then the ear, and after that the full corn in the ear." The progress and produce were seen, in deep convictions of sin; in great self-abasement; in godly sorrow; in earnest and constant prayer; in dependence on the Lord our righteousness and strength; and in love to his dear name. It would take up too much of your time, to go over the process of her experience till within a few days of her dissolution. Suffice it to observe, that she finished her course, not only with peace but joy; fully aware of her approaching departure, and impressed with all the importance attached to the event, yet triumphing over it.

On the Tuesday preceding her death, her mother coming into the room after some absence, she said to her with a smile, "I am happy:" and to a friend standing by, "How precious is the Saviour: he has pardoned my sins, and washed me in his own blood—I long to be with him, and to behold his face in righteousness."

On Wednesday morning her respiration becoming more difficult, she prayed if it was the Lord's will to give her more breath that she might praise him more; and tell poor sinners how precious he had been to her soul. She then repeated with great emphasis:

> Jesus, lover of my soul,
> Let me to thy bosom fly;
> While the raging billows roll,
> While the tempest still is high!
> Hide me, O my Saviour, hide,
> Till the storm of life is past;
> Safe into the haven guide,
> O receive my soul at last!
>
> Other refuge have I none,
> Hangs my helpless soul on thee;
> Leave, ah! leave me not alone.
> Still support and comfort me:
> All my trust on thee is stay'd,
> All my help from thee I bring,
> Cover my defenceless head
> With the shadow of thy wing!

Soon after this she broke forth and said:

> I'll praise my Maker with my breath,
> And when my soul is lost in death
> Praise shall employ my nobler powers:
> My days of praise shall ne'er be past,
> While life, and thought, and being last,
> Or immortality endures.

And again:

> My Jesus shall be still my theme
> While in this world I stay;
> I'll sing my Saviour's lovely name,
> When all things else decay.

* See a very just and elegant delineation of the character of this most excellent man, whose death was so deeply and universally deplored, in an address delivered on the occasion, to the Sunday-schools and the Teachers, by the Rev. Thomas Roberts, A. M.

And then looking upward said, "When heart and flesh faileth," be Thou "the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever."

—On Thursday morning, after struggling for some time to all appearance in the agonies of death, she revived, and said to her attached friend, "How precious is the Saviour; O never, never forget him:" and to her parent, "You, my dear mother, will praise him to an eternity, for all the happiness I feel. It appears as if the Saviour's everlasting arms were underneath me; and the angels beckoning me away to glory. O precious Saviour! that I had more breath to praise thee. O come and take me to Thyself, that I may cast my crown at Thy feet, and sing "worthy is the Lamb that was slain."

At one time she expressed a great desire to be taken home to Bath,* that she might see her young friends, and tell them how good the Saviour had been to her; and exhort them to seek Him while they had health and strength; but finding this to be impracticable, she submitted to the will of her heavenly Father: but said to her mother, "Let me however be taken home to be buried. Let my young friends see me, give them my dying love, and tell them how happy I should have been could I have seen them, to speak of the Saviour's goodness." She particularly wished to have seen the preacher who is now addressing you; but as his public engagements prevented her the satisfaction, she desired her mother to tell him, "That she had a good hope through grace—That Jesus was all her salvation and all her desire—That she was cleansed in His blood, and clothed in his righteousness."

At another time, she exclaimed, "Though the earthly house of this tabernacle be dissolving, I have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens."

These are only *a few* of her remarks and feelings. She continued exulting in the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, when breath permitted, till the moment of her departure drew near: and when she could no longer utter aloud the happiness she felt, she was distinctly heard to whisper "O come, Lord Jesus, come quickly. Come take me to thyself. I am accepted in the beloved. I am waiting his commands. I am longing to depart to be with Jesus which is far better."

Well, this beautiful flower is not destroyed, but only transplanted—transplanted from a wintry climate and an ungenial soil to flourish near "the tree of life which is in the midst of the paradise of God."

And now what remains? When Jesus was dying in anguish on the Cross, and amidst the insults of the multitude (never was there a scene of distress like her's,) Mary, his mother, was standing by; and I am happy to find here this morning, the mother of this beloved child. You who have been bereaved yourselves will sympathize with her. Yet perhaps no one of you has been called to lose in sad succession, several infants; a son at seventeen full of every kind of promise; a husband, and *such* a husband; a daughter, and *such* a daughter! But my afflicted friend, there is one—the God of all comfort—who knows thy frame—knows all thy walking through this great wilderness—and has engaged to deliver thee in six troubles, and that in seven, no evil shall touch thee. Indeed you feel that the affliction has been alleviated, sanctified, glorified! Your grateful mind has led you to acknowledge, that you have much more reason for joy than sorrow. Her death is not only her gain, but your's. You have gained by it a fresh claim on the presence of God; you have gained a new promise, "I will be with thee in trouble." You have gained another loosening from earth and another attraction in heaven; and you will now resemble the sheep that I have seen in the meadow following after the shepherd, bleating, that has taken up her lamb—So you will long to be with Jesus who has gathered your lamb with his arm, and carries it in his bosom. I feel on the present occasion; but allow me to say, the parent I most pity, is not the parent that has just seen a child delivered from the burden of the flesh, and a vale of tears, and exalted to sit with the Saviour on his throne—but the parent whose heart is bleeding and breaking over a child that has sinned away every religious advantage, and in the career of iniquity is proceeding from evil to evil. "Weep ye not for the dead, neither bemoan him; but weep sore for him that goeth away; for he shall return no more, nor see his native country."—

I am peculiarly concerned to render the event useful to you, the sister and brothers of the deceased. You have, my young friends, been several times solemnly addressed by the providence as well as the word of God. I trust it has not been entirely in vain. But it is with you to determine whether you are sufficiently decided. It is for you to determine whether you are giving full scope to the convictions, which from your education and advantages you surely must often feel. It is for you to determine whether "the world and the things of the world" are swaying you, or you are living as you will wish you had lived, when you come to die. You have long heard the gospel. Have you received it? From a child you have known the Holy Scriptures. Have they made you wise unto salvation? You have seen that the saints are the excellent in the earth. Is all your delight in them? You have now much in heaven. Are you to be connected with it, or separated from it, for ever? God forbid that there should be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when you shall see Abraham, and

* She died at the Hot-Wells.

Isaac, and Jacob, and your endeared kindred in the kingdom of God—and ye yourselves shut out.

My young friends in general, suffer the word of exhortation. You have had another instance before you of the delusion of depending on a future season, for an attention to the things that belong to your everlasting peace. In the midst of life you are in death. Childhood and youth are vanity. Should life amidst a thousand perils be spared, the heart may be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin, and by unsanctified attendance on the means of grace. Or should you in advanced years be enabled to seek the Lord, the misimprovement of the most favoured period of your time will occasion bitter repentance. You will then see, but too late to retrieve them, the losses you have sustained by the neglect of early piety. I have avoided remarking therefore till now, how often and how much the deceased regretted that she had not sought the Lord earlier." "O," said she, "O that I had known the Saviour sooner. O that I had known Him from the age of six, or even four, the time then would have been too short to praise Him." For *your* seeking him early, my young friends, she discovered her solicitude in death. For this purpose she desired to be brought to her own house, that as the eye affecteth the heart, you might be impressed with the sight of so early a corpse. Many of you have seen it; and others have followed it this morning to the grave. And I see you are impressed. You are saying, "Ah! she is gone—our lovely companion—we shall no more see her in the house, or walk with her in the field. We shall no more see her—dealing out her garments to the poor—no more see her teaching, surrounded by her little Sunday-school circle"—Yes, you weep, and these tears become you. I love to see them.—You are *now* impressed: and I have no doubt of the *sincerity* of your present feelings and vows—but I have of their *permanency*. I fear you will go forth and straightway forget what manner of persons you now are. I fear you will turn again to folly. "O that they were wise; that they understood this; that they would consider their latter end."

"The voice said, Cry: and I said what shall I cry. All flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof fadeth away: but the word of the Lord endureth for ever; and this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you."

AN ATTEMPT TO REGULATE THE CLAIMS OF THE CHRISTIAN MINISTRY:

A SERMON

PREACHED AT THE SEPARATION OF

THE REV. JAMES STRATTON,

TO THE PASTORAL OFFICE OVER THE CHURCH AND CONGREGATION, MEETING IN PADDINGTON CHAPEL, NOVEMBER 18, 1818.

BY WILLIAM JAY.

To THOMAS WILSON, Esq.

Sir,—It would pain me, could I think, that the Pastor, or the Church and Congregation, or the numerous and respectable Ministers who joined them in urging the publication of the following Discourse, deemed themselves slighted by the Individuality of this Dedication.

I am persuaded however, that without a single exception, they will applaud the conviction that has determined me, without his knowledge, to inscribe these pages solely to a gentleman—who was the generous founder and supporter of the Chapel, in which the solemnities were held—who has long been the unwearied friend and munificent patron of the institution to which the people owe their approved minister—who values property much more as an instrument of usefulness than of honour or enjoyment—and, by the grace of God, is ready to every good work.—I am, Sir, with the most unfeigned respect, your humble and obedient servant,

WILLIAM JAY.

Bath, Dec. 1, 1818.

Now know I that the Lord will do me good, seeing I have a levite to my priest.—Judges xvii. 13.

We are here led back to an early period of the Jewish history, and to a sad portion of the Jewish church. But while we wonder and condemn, it becomes us to admit into the account, the peculiar disadvantages, civil and religious, under which they now laboured; and to remember, that sins are to be judged of, not by their grossness but guilt; and that guilt is to be determined by the measure of means and privileges neglected and abused. "The servant which knew his lord's will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes. But he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes. For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required; and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more."

—Let us enter into the story. Here is an old woman very covetous, and yet very religious in her way. She had saved up eleven hundred shekels of silver, and hid them. But Micah her son soon finds and seizes the treasure—for there are children who are neither ashamed or afraid to steal from their parents;—upon which, she falls into a passion, and not only raves but even curses. Her imprecating the divine vengeance on the head of the thief, terrified Micah; he confessed the roguery, and restored the money. This threw her into an ecstasy of pleasure, so that instead of upbraiding him, she exclaims: "Blessed be thou of the Lord my son:" declaring at the same time that she had intended the whole sum for himself—"I had wholly dedicated the silver unto the Lord from my hand for my son, to make a graven image and a molten image." The property however, though wholly pledged, was too precious, on recovery, to be wholly parted with: she therefore keeps nine hundred shekels, and squeezes out only two for the sacred service. These "she gave to the

founder, who made thereof a graven image and a molten image; and they were in the house of Micah." Thus a species of idolatry entered this family, and from this family spread through the whole tribe of Dan. It was not a sin committed against the first commandment, in worshipping another God: but against the second commandment, in worshipping the true God under a similitude.

But what will he do for a priest? "He consecrated one of his own sons." But He does not long remain in office. The case was this. A strolling Levite had gone abroad in search of employment and promotion. In his vagabond rambles he comes to mount Ephraim, and to the house of Micah. "And Micah said unto him, whence comest thou? And he said unto him, I am a Levite of Bethlehem-judah, and I go to sojourn where I may find a place. And Micah said unto him, dwell with me, and be unto me a father and a priest, and I will give thee ten shekels of silver by the year, and a suit of apparel, and thy victuals." Clothes and food, and twenty-five shillings a year, were no great matters. "The ministry" says Henry, "is a good calling, but a bad trade." The Levite however is content, and his employer is happy—"Then said Micah, now know I that the Lord will do me good, seeing I have a Levite to my priest."

Here we have something to commend, and something to censure, whether we consider the case more generally, or particularly.

It was surely *right in him, to be concerned for the blessing of God.*—"The Lord will do me good." It is obvious that he expected nothing without the Divine favour; and was persuaded that "the blessing of the Lord, it maketh rich, and he addeth no sorrow with it." I am bold to say, that many of our fellow-creatures are not equally wise. They live without God in the world. God is not in all their thoughts. If ever he breaks in among them, He is considered an intruder, and they labour to expel him, saying with those in the days of Job, "Depart from us, we desire not the knowledge of thy ways:" or with those in the time of Isaiah, "Cause the Holy One of Israel to cease from before us." Not that this is the utterance of the lip, but of the life: actions, we say, speak louder than words; and the sacred writers to shock us with their nature and tendency, put the dispositions and the conduct of the wicked into language.—Have they succeeded in business? "They sacrifice to their net, and burn incense to their own drag; because by them their portion is fat, and their meat plenteous." Have they a journey, or an enterprise before them? They say, "To-day, or to-morrow we *will* go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell and get gain." Whereas they ought to say, "If *the Lord will* we shall live, and do this or that." They are anxious and eager to please men, especially if they have power and influence; but they forget that every thing depends on our pleasing God. For in *His* favour is life. He only is blessed whom God blesses. "Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it; except the Lord keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain." We should be principally concerned to secure the benediction of God; and above all things His gracious favour.—"Remember me, O Lord, with the favour thou bearest unto thy people!"

But while it was right in Micah to be regardful of the blessing of God—it was *wrong in him to derive his expectation from such an ambiguous and delusive source of evidence.*—"Now I know the Lord will do me good, seeing I have a Levite to my priest." Ah, my brethren, this fine reasoner has had a number of followers in every age. The Jews, because they had among them the ark and the temple, and wore the rite of circumcision, and could call Abraham their father, presumed upon their security; and their destruction took them by surprise. Many now, according as the degree of their ignorance requires a grosser or a more refined delusion, conclude that God will surely do them good, because they were born of Christian parents, or were baptized in their infancy, or have observed Good Friday and Lent, or have fasted and given alms to the poor, or have been moral in their deportment, or have reformed themselves from every vice, or have been the subjects of conviction of sin, or possess edifying gifts, or rank with professors of religion, "having a name to live."—But it would be endless to particularize all the articles in this magazine of delusion. "He feedeth on ashes; a deceived heart hath turned him aside, that he cannot deliver his soul, nor say is there not a lie in my right hand?" My dear hearers you must be accepted in the beloved; you must be saved by the washing of regeneration, and the renewing of the Holy Ghost; you must worship God in the spirit and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh, before you are authorized to say, with regard to prosperity or adversity, sickness or health, life or death, time or eternity —"Now know I that the Lord will do me good." "We know," says the Apostle, "that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose."—But all besides this, is only the repetition of Micah's folly in another shape.

Again. I observe the same mixture of right and wrong, truth and error, in a more particular instance, and which brings us nearer our subject. Micah does well in *prizing* the priestly office, for it was the appointment of God; but he does ill in viewing it *without discrimination*, and regarding it as an *abso-*

lute criterion or expedient; for a thing may be excellent in itself, and not available in all cases: but his confidence has no qualification: he despairs of nothing, *solely* on the ground that he has to officiate for him, one of the sacerdotal race. "Now know I that the Lord will do me good, seeing I have a Levite to my priest."

Behold then, my brethren, the developement of the plan we have in view this morning. You have now auspiciously established among you, a settled ministry. This is an institution for which you ought to be thankful; you should consider it a token for good, and you should look for a blessing from it. And yet you may conceive of it improperly, you may think more highly of it than you ought to think, you may even convert the privilege into a penalty. Allow me to say, with regard to the ministry of our young and esteemed brother now separated to the pastoral office in this church and congregation—That you may undervalue it—That you may rely too much upon it—That you may pervert it. Against these three mistakes, it will be my endeavour to guard you. I shall

I. ATTEMPT TO JUSTIFY THE ESTIMATION IN WHICH IT IS YOUR DUTY TO HOLD THE MINISTRY.

II. I SHALL SHOW IN WHAT CASES YOUR DEPENDENCE UPON IT MAY BE IMPROPER AND CENSURABLE. And

III. I SHALL EVINCE THE POSSIBILITY OF YOUR EVEN TURNING THE BLESSING INTO A CURSE.

I. Did you ever observe, my brethren, the language of the Apostle to the Thessalonians? "Know them that labour among you and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you, and esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake." This it must be acknowledged is a high demand. To "know" them—to "esteem" them—to esteem them "highly"—to esteem them "very" highly—to esteem them very highly "in love!" But the Apostle adds—"for their work's sake." As if He had said, the respect regards the office rather than the man; and attaches to the man only in reference to the office, and in proportion only as he *is* the office really and alive. Such is the EXALTED ESTIMATION in which it is our DUTY to hold the ministry of the word. How shall we JUSTIFY IT?

Let us appeal to *the declarations of God the judge of all.* What was to crown, according to Jeremiah, the return of the Jews from Babylon into their own land? "I will give them pastors after mine own heart, who shall feed them with knowledge and understanding." What does Isaiah consider a full compensation for all the calamities of life? "Though the Lord give you the bread of adversity, and the water of affliction, yet shall not thy teachers be removed into a corner any more, but thine eyes shall see thy teachers: and thine ears shall hear a word behind thee, saying, this is the way, walk ye in it, when ye turn to the right hand, and when ye turn to the left." What does God by Amos deem worse than famine and drought. "Behold the days come, saith the Lord GOD, that I will send a famine in the land, not a famine of bread, or a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the Lord: and they shall wander from sea to sea, and from the north even to the east; they shall run to and fro to seek the word of the Lord, and shall not find it." What does the Lord Jesus deem the worst of all judgments, with which to alarm the Ephesian church to repentance? "Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent."

Let us appeal to *the example and authority of the Lord Jesus.* It was said by a Scotch writer, that God had one only begotten Son, and he made a preacher of him. This is no more quaint than true. It is certain that when he entered this world, he did not become a merchant, he did not become a scholar, he did not place himself at the head of an army, or ascend a throne—all this was beneath him: but he *could* say, "I have preached righteousness in the great congregation:" he *did go* "through all the towns and villages preaching:" and with regard to *Him* it was said, "The poor have the gospel preached unto them?" And He not only honoured the ministry, by preaching in person. "He came," says the Apostle, "and preached peace to you that were afar off, and to them that were nigh." How did He preach to them that were "afar off?" Not personally. He never passed himself, the confines of Judea: He was the minister of the circumcision: He was only sent to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.—But, He did it relatively: He did it by sending forth his commissioned servants, and saying, "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature." "And they went forth, and preached every where, the Lord working with them, and confirmind the word with signs following."

Let us appeal to *the manner in which the office was fully and permanently established.* We are taught to consider it as nothing less than the fruit of our Lord's meditation, the consequence and the proof of his exalted state. And was it a trifle for which he died and rose again! Was it an insignificance that crowned the triumph of this unexampled conqueror? "Wherefore he saith, when he ascended on high, he led captivity captive, and he gave gifts unto men"—And what were they? "He gave some, apostles and some prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors, and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry for

the edifying of the body of Christ: till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ." Do we not here see that the office is not of temporary obligation, but to last as long as the sun and moon endure throughout all generations? Do we not see that ministers are the gifts of Christ, and the gifts not of his bounty only, but of his glory?—A spiritual excellency requires a spiritual perception to discern it. "If the world knew *him* not," if they saw in him "no form nor comeliness," what wonder is it, if they see none in his servants, who are men of like passions with ourselves, and compassed with infirmities, and often destitute of secular attractions: but angels, who are proverbially wise; angels, who saw what was the first thing He did as soon as He had received all power in heaven and in earth; angels, who heard him say, I'll now bestow something, do something worthy of my elevation—and then established the ministry in its various branches and degrees: angels in their intercourse with our world, view the heralds of salvation as the most important characters in it, and repair to the ordination of a minister with more interest, than mortals ever crowd to witness the coronation of a king. Angels were present when Timothy received his orders: "I charge thee before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, and the elect angels, that thou observe these things without preferring one before another, doing nothing by partiality." They rejoice, not at the foundation of a museum, but of a sanctuary; and if they foreknow things, exult not at the birth of a Wellington, but of a Whitefield.

For let us appeal to the *design* of the institution. It has been remarked, that the office of a lawyer is important, because it watches over our property; and the office of a physician much more so, because it guards our health; "For the life is more than meat, and the body than raiment." But even these are nothing to the soul and eternity; the soul and eternity alone are absolutely great: yet to *these*, our office is appropriated, and by these it is infinitely dignified. What, my young brother, can equal the mission which you have received of the Lord Jesus "to testify the gospel of the grace of God;" and "to show unto men the way of salvation." No angel ever came from heaven to earth on so weighty an errand as your's—"I send thee," says the Lord Jesus, "to open their eyes, to turn them from darkness to light and the power of Satan unto God, that they might receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me." *Your* aim is nothing less than to rescue guilty and depraved, yet immortal beings from the lowest hell, and conduct them to the heaven of heavens; to transform them from the resemblance of the devil, into the perfection of the image of the invisible God—And when all the labours of other professors will be annihilated; when the finest paintings, the sublimest statues, the most durable monuments, the pyramids of Egypt;—when the immortal works, (so are they called) of philosophers, legislators, historians, poets, shall be consumed; and the earth and all that is therein shall be burned up—the effects of your tears, and studies, and visiting and praying, and preaching, shall remain. And when every other relation now subsisting is destroyed, and the race of men will never blend again as masters and servants, as princes and subjects, as parents and children, and husbands and wives, the relation which has been formed and publicly ratified between you and this people, will be indissoluble; and when they die, or when you are dying, "What is your hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even they in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ, at his coming? For they are your glory and joy." I know not how to leave this article, or how to do any thing like justice to it. It is, my dear brother, the sublime, and the momentous *end* of your function that reflects so much honour, and fastens so much importance upon it. Things common or mean in themselves may acquire unspeakable excellence and grandeur by association and destiny. Your office is frequently held forth in the Scripture by images derived from employments abstractedly considered rather humble than glorious: but the weight it acquires from relation and design, is never for a moment left out. You are "a soldier," but it is in "the good fight of faith." You are a "fisher," but "a fisher of men." You are a "labourer," but a "labourer together with God." You are a "builder," but it is in "God's building." You are a "watchman," but you "watch for souls."

> You watch for Souls for whom the Lord,
> Did heavenly bliss forego;
> For Souls that must for ever live,
> In raptures or in wo.

Thus a small insignificant piece of paper is converted into a bank note, and by a sovereign impression becomes current for a thousand pounds. Thus Raphael took a roll of canvass, of which the weaver thought nothing, and the vender nothing: but he threw down upon it his immortal tints, and bade it become the admiration of the world. And thus, Sir, your office rises into ineffable greatness, by taking the soul of man, for its subject, and eternity for its aim.

Again. Let us appeal to *its adaptation to usefulness.* A minister is the same to a Christian, as a master to a pupil. The pupil, left to himself, would be neglectful; other things would crowd in, and the lesson be often forgotten. But the master, by his

fixed and regular attentions, keeps off neglect and forgetfulness. Though the Scriptures are in the hands of all, and all are commanded to search them, we know what are the avocations, interruptions, and indifferences of the generality of mankind. The minister, by his separation from "the affairs of this life," and giving himself "wholly to reading, and meditation, and prayer," is likely to become better acquainted with the extent of revelation than others; and will be able to unite what lies in the Scriptures scattered; to particularize what is general; and to apply what is common. He has an opportunity to place things so directly before the mind, that it cannot get by them unobserved; and so to characterize individuals, that hearers cannot elude the finger charge of conscience, "Thou art the man." He follows his hearers into the various relations of life, and trains of condition, and presents the most suitable directions, warnings, cautions, and encouragements. He studies tempers, and prejudices, and infirmities, and urges each by the most appropriate motives: he bends to circumstances, and becomes all things to all men, if by any means he might save some. In nothing does the wisdom of God appear more than in such an appointment. Julian the apostate was so struck with the importance of such an institution, in order to maintain or spread any system, that he had thoughts of establishing a Pagan ministry himself, for the revival and promotion of heathenism. Indeed what can equal the advantage of a living address from man to man, where numbers are assembled together in silence, the place they occupy sacred, and all reminded that they are in the presence of God. No other mode of communicating information with which we are acquainted, or which we are able to conceive, can awaken half the attention, or excite half the interest, as the ordinance of preaching the word: it is not only the understanding speaking to the understanding, but the heart speaking to the heart, and the conscience to the conscience. By this engine, if wisely used, every power of the mind is plied, and every feeling of the soul is touched. God forbid we should ever undervalue the Bible, yet we are accustomed to say, "The gospel is come" into such a town or village, when it begins to be preached there; and there is a propriety in the remark: for though the gospel was there before in the Scriptures, it was there as a revelation only, not as a dispensation. It was there presented to the eye, but not addressed to the ear, and "faith cometh by hearing." There was the "hammer," as God calls his word; but no hand to strike with it. There was the trumpet; but not the man to put it to his mouth, that it might "give a certain sound." There was the seed, but not the sower; and it is the seed, not sacked, but sown, that yields "first the blade, then the ear, and after that the full corn in the ear." To all this we may add—that baptism, as an ordinance of God, is to be administered.—That churches are to be formed, and members added to them, as souls are converted.—That the Lord's supper is to be disposed to the household of God.—That his sheep and his lambs are to be watched and fed.—That discipline is to be maintained, and offenders suspended or cut off. Can a book, even an inspired book, do all this?

Once more. Let us appeal to the *success* by which it has been owned and honoured. How many have been called by it out of darkness into God's marvellous light. Of the numbers now serving in this vale of tears, and the myriads adoring before the throne, what an immense majority are acknowledging, that it was by the preaching of the gospel that as sinners they were converted from the error of their ways. Yet be it remembered, that the usefulness of the ministry is not to be confined to conversion. It *helps* those much who have believed through grace. It builds them up in their most holy faith; and presents every man perfect in Christ Jesus. How many of you can here bear a grateful testimony. How often has the minister been to you like the angel to Hagar in the parching desert: he has opened your eyes and shown you a well. How often has he removed your fears, and inspired you with holy confidence. How often has he strengthened your weak hands and confirmed your feeble knees. How often has he comforted you in all your tribulation, so that you have returned home able to face with fresh courage the trials of life again. Perhaps to him you owe your respectability in the world; perhaps to his wise counsels and faithful rebukes you owe your preservation from a false, or a fatal step, that would have involved you in mischief or ruin—perhaps to him you owe even your own self beside. For neither is the usefulness of the ministry to be judged of by its saving effects. In how many ways does it restrain where it does not convert; and moralize where it does not sanctify. Indeed, with regard to the morals and welfare of the community, we are persuaded, if an accurate comparison could be made, more would be found to depend on ministers than magistrates. In the largeness of our wishes, and while reflecting upon the degenerate state of every neighbourhood, after all the means used for their amendment, we sometimes complain too much, and are not aware of the variety, and the degree of wholesome and happy effects produced by religious institutions. Were our altars thrown down, our sanctuaries shut up, and every minister silenced, we should soon read, in frightful style, the value of an office which too many despise.

Finally. We appeal to *the divine engage-*

ments. For, my brethren, God has not left the institution to its natural tendency: neither are we encouraged and animated with regard to its utility, by observation and experience. We have his word, upon which he has caused us to hope, and the Scripture cannot be broken. He has said, "In all places where I record my name, I will come unto thee and I will bless thee." He has said, "I will abundantly bless her provisions, I will fill her poor with bread. I will also clothe her priests with salvation, and her saints shall shout aloud for joy." He has said, "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world."

Now these are not remarks designed to eke out a discourse; neither are they great swelling words of vanity, arising from a wish to give a disproportionate importance to a calling in which the speaker himself is placed. They are the words of truth and soberness. They are reasonings; they are arguments; they are proofs: and the more they are examined fairly and impartially, the more worthy of countenance and support will the ministerial function appear.

And therefore, my young friend, feel the worth of your work, and magnify, not yourself, but your office. A personal valuation would be censurable, but a relative, is both allowable and useful. It is perfectly compatible with humbleness of mind, while it will preclude thoughtlessness and levity; and prevent all those indecorums and buffooneries, from which you have been so exemplarily secured, but which bring discredit on so many of our rising priesthood. It will make you feel your responsibility; it will be a source of vigilance, circumspection and prayer; it will inspire you with a holy anxiety to walk worthy of the high vocation to which you are called.

And you, the members of this church and congregation, be assured, that instead of rebuking your pleasure on such an occasion as this, we partake of it, "and joy and rejoice with you." Yes, these are reasons, why you should hail the ministry of the gospel with which you are favoured, and indulge a lively expectation of blessings from it. But the expectation must not be *unqualified.* We wish not to diminish the regard you feel, but we would purify the principle, we would give it a safe direction, we would keep it within proper bounds. We therefore proceed,

II. To observe, THAT YOU MAY OVERRATE THE MINISTRY; AND TO SPECIFY THE INSTANCES IN WHICH YOUR RELIANCE UPON IT IS IMPROPER.

And First, It appears *in laying an undue stress on a particular description of its officers.* Micah thought nothing of the character of his priest, if he had Levitical blood in him. He might be as wicked as Satan, if he could prove legitimate descent: and therefore, though he knew him to be an idle, time-serving, hungry hireling, prostituting himself to the service of idols to get a piece of bread, he was satisfied, and sung out his superstitious confidence; "Now know I that the Lord will do me good, seeing I have a Levite to my priest." What ignorance and delusion, to expect that the divine blessing would assuredly flow through such fingers, merely because of the tribe to which he belonged! And yet are there not persons, in a much more enlightened period, who approximate the same folly? Some, whatever may be his gifts or grace, would not for the world hear a man that is not episcopally sanctioned—yet will hear any thing upon earth that is. Yea, we have been told, that in this country, all who worship out of the established church are left to the uncovenanted mercies of God; that all their ministers are destitute of a legitimate authorization; and therefore that all their ministrations are invalid. Yet it is not many years ago, since the venerable Secker filled our metropolitan chair; but he was baptized by the hands of dissenters, without either godfathers or godmothers to be answerable for him. Yet he ordained numbers to the sacred office; and what is more lamentable still, he baptized his present Majesty, head of the church, all of which, according to this principle, was null and void, as being performed by an officiator who either had no baptism himself, or a useless one. Nor was this a solitary instance. It is well known that bishop Reynolds in England, and Hopkins in Ireland, and Cooper and Leighton in Scotland, were in the same dilemma, so that all they did personally, and all that was done by those on whom they laid hands, was illegal and ineffectual; and now, alas! it is to be feared, that it is too late to stop consequences, or even to ascertain the multiplied directions in which the unhallowed streams have run!!—And are there persons pretending to serious religion, who know the importance of doctrine, and of holiness in a minister, and yet can recommend people to attend on a man, *merely* because he is a Levite, however wretched in living and teaching too—while God has placed near them a man of acknowledged godliness, and who preaches "all the words of this life." O tell it not in Gath. "What is the chaff to the wheat, saith the Lord?"

But let us turn from the episcopalian to the academic. A degree of the same leaven works nearer home. It is, blessed be God, the boast of the dissenters—forgive us this wrong—that among us, office never has been, and never can be a substitute for morality of character and truth of doctrine. Yet there was a time—for there is less of it than formerly—when a minister was rather coldly received and lightly regarded, unless he had been brought up at the feet of some Gama-

liel. We are far from depreciating the schools of the prophets. A thousand advantages attend a solid education for the ministry: and it is peculiarly desirable in this age of increased and diffused knowledge, for young men to be initiated into their work through these excellent institutions, which the grace of God has provided. But if we abuse privileges by laying too much stress upon them, God will pour contempt upon our pride, and show that he can call a man from the field, as well as from the grove. Some of our most acceptable and successful preachers have been, shall I say, rather irregularly introduced: but what they wanted in Levitical training, they made up in diligence and zeal: and while their more learned and regular brethren, who rather looked suspiciously towards them, were smoothing their dull periods, and softening the bells, whose "drowsy tinklings were to lull the distant folds," these men with burning words, and fervent in spirit, rushed forth and called sinners to repentance.

Some regard only a man of genius and splendid abilities. Talents are the gifts of God; and it is delightful to see extensive learning, a profound understanding, the power of reasoning, and eloquence of speech, consecrated to the use of the sanctuary. But it is not to be concealed, that men of the mightiest fame, will be surrounded hereafter by a small number of converts, compared with some whose natural and acquired endowments, never raised them into celebrity; but who deeply knew, and affectionately preached Jesus Christ and him crucified. The treasure is put into earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may appear to be of God, and not of man. Dr. Owen, early in his ministry, went to hear Dr. Calamy, one of the most famous preachers of the day. After waiting in the place for some time, he saw ascending the pulpit, a plain country man, and felt disposed to go out; but reverence forbade. He was soon struck with his prayer; and still more with his sermon. His text was "O ye of little faith, wherefore do ye doubt?" and he entered so experimentally into the doubts of God's people, and so satisfactorily solved them, that the mind of this "prince of divines" as Cecil calls him, was so effectually released from a burden of distress, that from that hour he went on his way rejoicing. And I know a man who was once hearing a minister, whose preaching was very inferior to his character. At first he was much disappointed, and a naughty temper was working in him, but he received, he hopes, a very salutary rebuke by seeing at the end of the pew a poor woman bathed in tears, under this very sermon; and he said to himself "what God has sanctified call not thou common." A spruce, self-conceited young divine was recently in company, turning into ridicule a very plain, but laborious, useful preacher in a village. There are occasions when if we were told to hold our peace, the very stones would cry out. A senior minister therefore said, "Sir, I never heard any one admire you, except yourself; but I have heard many speak well of the labours of this good man. I have never heard of any good you have done; but I have admitted two members into my church both of whom were lately awakened by his familiar addresses."

Some are entirely wrapped up in a favourite. A preference is allowable; and I hope it will always among you, be in favour of the man you have voluntarily chosen. But he cannot, he ought not to be always, confined to this pulpit. Others must preach occasionally; and how censurable will it be, if they look down and see empty pews; if they watch ill visages coming up the isles, and malignant features in the seats—that seem to say to God, that he could not bless them now, if he would. Some if they know it will not go unless their idol is to preach; but when he is present, it is enough; they think of nothing else; and go with the presumption "now know I that the Lord will do me good." "But might not this idolatry justly provoke God to remove this robber of His glory, or to render his services unprofitable?" "For ye are yet carnal? For whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men? For while one saith, I am of Paul; and another, I am of Apollos; are ye not carnal? Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man? I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase. So then, neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase."

Secondly. You improperly rely upon it, when you view it as *the only medium of usefulness.* It is owing to this, that some pious men, concerned to do good (and such a concern is natural to the new creature) are eager to enter the sacred office when they have little encouragement from the providence of God. Hence they often leave their callings, and involve themselves in worldly difficulties—not considering that there are numberless ways in which we may glorify God and serve our generation according to his will, without our assuming the ministerial character. Paul speaks even of "women that laboured with him in the gospel:" not by preaching, for this he interdicts, but by influences and exertions becoming their sex and their condition in life. And blessed be God in our day, we know how to understand this. We have multiplied proofs that females can co-operate with ministers in the advancement of the cause of God. Witness those

young women who devote so many of their leisure hours to the instruction of our Sunday-schools. Witness those mothers and grandmothers, who from children teach their Timothies to know the holy Scriptures, which are able to make them wise unto salvation. Witness those wives who by their "chaste conversation coupled with fear," and "the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit," "win" their husbands "without the word." Witness those handmaids who by early rising, and order and cleanliness and fidelity, and not answering again, "adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things." A man may carry on business, and devote a good portion of it to the support and spreading of the gospel: and *he* labours for God in the shop, while another pleads for him in the pulpit: and I feel it my duty to pray for the success of the tradesman, as well as of the preacher—They are both God's servants.

And as God is not to be confined to this expedient in doing good *by* us, neither is He to be confined to it, in doing good *to* us. The Holy One of Israel may limit us, but we must not limit Him. He dwelleth not exclusively in temples made with hands: neither are ministers the only mediums of His gracious communications. Preaching is indeed the ordinary means by which He converts, edifies, and comforts His people; and His people therefore prize it; and He induces even those who never had the advantage to long after it; and He will not sanction our neglect, not even our occasional neglect, not even the neglect of the week-day service, when it is in our power to attend. Yet persons may be called to travel in "a dry and thirsty land where no water is." They may be removed by business into a neighbourhood where the dispensation of the gospel is not enjoyed. They may be confined by accident, disease, or infirmity from the courts of the Lord, in a kind of domestic exile—But in cases like these, when they are unable to follow Him, He will follow them. He will teach them by the rod, when they cannot hear the word. He will be "a little sanctuary to them in the midst of the heathen:" and where they little expected any thing either of God or glory, give them reason often to exclaim "This is no other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven." And have you not found private devotion, the reading of the Scriptures, family worship, meetings for social prayer, Christian conversation—have you not found these, profitable as well as the ministry of the word?

Thirdly. It is unduly regarded when you suppose it can do you any good *without the influence of the spirit of God.* This is a lesson which ministers must learn. In proportion, my dear brother, as you learn it, you are likely to be useful. It will make you not less studious, but more prayerful. You will honour God more by your dependence, and them that honour Him, He will honour. You will then also be encouraged and animated in your work, not according to the degree of your learning, or eloquence, or reasoning powers, but the sufficiency of his grace, and the promise he has given: "As the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater; so shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void; but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it."—And people must learn this lesson, if they would hear to profit. God would be accessary to idolatry, had he established any religious means that would become substitutes for his presence, or draw you off from dependence upon himself. He will convince you by experience, as well as Scripture, that instruments however suitable in themselves, and though divinely appointed, can do nothing without his own agency. He will bring you to look beyond means, and to cease from man; for in this, as well as in every thing else,

> "Sure as on creatures we depend,
> Our hopes in disappointment end."

The gospel is expressly called "the ministration of the spirit," and it is so denominated, not only to account for its revelation, but its efficiency. "Our gospel," says the apostle to the Thessalonian converts, "came to you not in word only, but in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance." When Paul and Barnabas went forth preaching, "the hand of the Lord was with them," and as the result, "many believed and turned unto the Lord."

Fourthly. You improperly rest upon it when you imagine it can do you good, *without your own concern and concurrence.* There are some who seem to believe that preaching is to operate like a charm; and that it is enough to wear the talisman, without thinking of it. They appear to confound it with those physical causes in nature, which act without our anxiety, or even our knowledge. The process of digestion, the circulation of the blood, the secretion and mixture of the spirits and fluids, all these agencies go on as well when we are asleep as when we are awake. But is this the case with your religious instruction and improvement? Can these go on, not only when you are attentive to the word, but when you are slumbering under it? Moral means can only operate morally. Even the influence of the Spirit does not supersede, or even alter this process. When God sanctifies our powers, he engages and employs them. He does not work upon man as mechanics work upon dead matter, where the timber and the stone are unconscious of

the operation of the saw and the chisel, and senseless of the uses for which they are preparing them. God does not work *upon* us at all.—He works *in* us: and he works in us to *will* and to *do*. So that what he does for us, is not yet done without us. We are the instruments as well as the subjects of his operation. He teaches, but *he* does not learn. *He* does not repent, but leads us to repentance. *He* does not pray, but inclines and enables us to pray; and so of the rest. Now let us apply this axiom to the case before us. The minister's thinking is not to hinder your thinking, but to aid it. What he delivers will do you no good, but as you understand it, and believe it, and receive it, and remember it, and act upon it. If you retire and pray before you go; if you enter the house of God with seriousness, and ask, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?"—If instead of hearing for others, you apply to your own souls the doctrine or the duties you hear: if you resolve in the strength of the Lord, to forsake whatever you shall be convinced is wrong, and to pursue truth, regardless of consequences: if laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings, as new born babes you desire the sincere milk of the word, that you may grow thereby:—You may then reasonably and scripturally conclude that God will surely do you good, and that your coming together will be for the better, and not for the worse: for he has said, "Blessed is the man that heareth me, *watching daily* at my gates, *waiting* at the posts of my doors."—"Blessed are they that hear the word of God and *do* it." "Whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and *continueth* therein, he being not a *forgetful hearer*, but a doer of the *work*, this man shall be blessed in his deed." But if you come here from mere custom or curiosity; if you come only to criticise, or to controvert; if you come like Ezekiel's hearers, because the prophet is like "one that hath a pleasant voice, and can play well on an instrument;" if you turn a solemn ordinance into a mere amusement, and disregard the doctrine of the cross, in quest of good language and flights of fancy; if you begin without God, and retire without reflection; you have no warrant to hope for any saving advantage. Yea, it is the way

III. To turn the blessing into a curse; and to render the ministry the very pledge and occasion of your spiritual and everlasting injury and ruin. This is a very awful part of our subject, not only as there is a possibility but also a probability that it will be exemplified in many, very many, who attend the preaching of the word. But I dare not keep it back. I must remark four things.

First. You are in great danger of *soul-delusion*. Why else does the apostle James say, "But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only deceiving your ownselves?" It is a thousand times better to have a wounded spirit, than a seared conscience; a thousand times better to "write bitter things against" ourselves, than to "cry, peace, peace, when there is no peace." "Wo to them that are at ease in Zion."—But observe how the man is lulled into a belief of his religion and safety when he has none. We are too prone to think well of people solely because of their attachment to a particular place of worship. We forget that in our day, there are few populous neighbourhoods in which the gospel is not preached; and that an attendance may be maintained on the most evangelical means accompanied by every kind of conduct; so that the habit is no criterion. Yet when persons become frequent and fixed hearers, when they seem to listen with attention, and are accustomed to express their approbation of what is delivered, we are too apt to set them down as decided, or at least as very promising characters; and their reputation contributes to their self-confidence, for we naturally and strongly lean to a favourable opinion entertained of us by others. The delusion is increased, by attaching themselves to the ministrations of a man noted for his plain dealing, and their being able to abide all his faithfulness and severity, while others are offended and flee. It is fed by the consideration that they have been convinced and alarmed; and that in their temporary and selfish distress, some promise occurred to their mind, which without hesitation they applied, and felt relieved. It is strengthened, if they have sometimes heard the word with joy, and had their natural feelings powerfully excited by the eloquence and energy of the speaker.—And now—now, nothing comes pure into their minds; every thing is perverted and poisoned in its passage, by this self-delusion. The sorrow of the world, which they must sometimes feel, is viewed by them as that godly sorrow which worketh repentance unto life. The admonitions of the preacher, urging the children of promise not to be faithless but believing, they apply to themselves, and repel with earnestness every suspicion of the reality of their religion, every inducement to self-examination as the temptations of the devil to doubt and unbelief—while without pain, without concern they are led to view their wrong tempers, their offences in word, their forgetfulness of duty, the coldness of their zeal, and the reluctance of their charity, as the infirmities of the dear people of God; for Paul himself felt a law in his members warring against the law of his mind, and said when he would do good, evil was present with him!—An alarm! I sound an alarm in the camp!—An enemy has crept in, and is harboured under the mask of a friend! I hardly know a plan

for tranquillizing the conscience without putting it in a state of safety, like this. It is an expedient that requires far less sacrifice and self-denial than any other with which we are acquainted. And as it is the most cheap so it is the least suspected, and therefore the likeliest to be employed often, by a being who can "transform himself into an angel of light." For this deceiver takes men, not only according to their tastes, but their convictions. What he is doing in the work of delusion in the church of Rome by pilgrimages and penance, and relics, and holy water, he is too wise, too skilful to attempt by the same means, among protestants. His purpose would be frustrated by the use of follies so bare and exploded. He knows the difference between Madrid and London: and he also knows the difference between congregations hearing nothing but moral doctrine and salvation by works; and those assemblies which are blessed "with the truth as it is in Jesus." In a large and very growing class of Christians, both in the establishment and out of it, he will not destroy, (allow me a strange phraseology) as a superstitious, and self-righteous; but as an evangelical devil—by the very means of grace—by a mere attendance upon, and—a barren approbation of, a gospel minister.

Secondly. You are in great danger of *penal obduracy.* There is such a thing as judicial impenitency. It is indeed no ordinary guilt that provokes it; as we see in Pharoah whose heart "the Lord hardened," And, Is not—let me ask, Is not the guilt of those of you who sit under the sound of the gospel faithfully and affectionately preached; Is not your guilt peculiarly great? Have not you been reproved and warned much oftener than Pharoah? Has not God spoken unto you by his Son? Have you not had "life and death set before you" in the most pleasing and awful forms? Have you not been "woed and awed, blessed and chastised?" Have not the messages of the word been enforced by the uneasinesses of conscience; the admonitions of friendship; the afflictions of Providence; by personal sickness; by family bereavements? Yet you have made him, year after year, stretch forth his hands all the day long to a disobedient and gainsaying people—and in the very "place of the holy" you remain "filthy still." And would it then be wonderful if God should send this young minister with the direful commission he addressed to Isaiah, "Go and tell this people, hear ye indeed, but understand not; and see ye indeed, but perceive not. Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and convert, and be healed." This can be fulfilled as effectually by withholding a necessary influence, as by any positive infliction. If food be deprived of its power to nourish, we die in the midst of plenty; yea, with the very elements of life in our lips. And do you apprehend no danger? Do you feel no dread!

If when the rain fell upon your neighbour's field, yours was always seen dry and parched: If, when the sun shone upon the surrounding garden, a dark cloud overshadowed yours—you would be instantly alarmed—you would be filled with horror—you would inquire, by what peculiar offence you had provoked Him to signalize you as the victim of his displeasure. And yet—yet you feel nothing, though you have seen numbers awakened and converted, sanctified and comforted by the word, while you have remained the same under all these salutary administrations—perhaps five—perhaps ten—perhaps twenty years—

But setting aside a penal obduracy there is—

Thirdly, what may be termed an *acquired impenitency the natural result of conduct.* Thus a heart may be "hardened through the deceitfulness of sin;" sin flattering the transgressor and alluring him on, till what was occasional becomes constant; and practice produces confirmed habits—and as well says the prophet may "the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots, as they learn to do good who are accustomed to do evil." And the heart is perhaps equally hardened by a course of unsanctified familiarity with the ordinances of religion. No characters are so unlikely to be wrought upon, as those who have heard till they are "past feeling" and have been seized with "the spirit of slumber." When Paul preached before Felix and Drusilla, as he reasoned of "temperance, righteousness and judgment to come," which of them "trembled?" not Drusilla—she was a Jewess: but Felix who was a heathen. She was accustomed to the sparks; but they were new to him and he startled. He had never heard the bell before—but she had lived hard by the church, and could sleep under the chimes, and the tollings too. We can usually distinguish a new hearer in our assemblies; he is struck; he listens; and sometimes seems forced to do it, in spite of himself. But there is often a lolling, a kind of careless ease, an air of indifference, an unsusceptibleness of impression, in older hearers that seem to say "We know all this—and *only* know it."—I cannot be chargeable with personal reflection as I am ignorant of individuals in this assembly. I can only draw the bow at a venture, but O God if the culprit be present, direct the arrow between the joints and the harness. Are there none here who once heard, and felt powerfully under the word? You then feared—you wept—you resolved—you promised, you forsook your vices—you sometimes

even entered your closet—you seemed to walk with God. But after a time these convictions were starved away, and you returned again to folly. You neglected private prayer, and began to tamper with sin; at first in slighter instances, and then in more criminal—and perhaps though concealed from the eye of the world, you are now living in dishonesty, or drunkenness, or chambering and wantonness—and yet retain your place in the house of God. And now nothing you hear affects you—nothing however threatening alarms you—nothing however tender melts you.—But now, after the hardness and impenitence of your heart you come here "treasuring up wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God." For

Finally, you are exposed to *aggravated misery as the final result of misused privileges.* If YOU perish YOU will have no cloak for your sin, and no alleviation of your punishment. YOUR condemnation first, will not be the condemnation of a *Heathen.* "The men of Nineveh shall rise in judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it; because they repented at the preaching of Jonas; and, behold a greater than Jonas is here. The queen of the south shall rise up in the judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: for she came from the uttermost parts of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and, behold a greater than Solomon is here." "But I say unto you, it shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the day of judgment than for you." YOUR condemnation, secondly, will not be the condemnation of a *Jew.* "See that ye refuse not him that speaketh; for if they escaped not who refused him that spake on earth, much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from him that speaketh from heaven." "He that despised Moses' law, died without mercy under two or three witnesses; of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the spirit of grace!" YOUR condemnation thirdly, will not be the condemnation of a *Christian* ill-instructed and neglected—the condemnation of a *Papist*, who was denied the use of the Scripture, and led by a blind guide—or the condemnation of a *Protestant*, who never heard "the word of his grace" to which God alone gives "testimony;" but of one whose pastor kept him at the foot of the cross, and with tears "prayed him in Christ's stead to be reconciled unto God." YOURS, will not be fourthly, the condemnation of *a devil*—The estate which he kept not, is nothing compared with that which you have rejected—Jesus took not on him the nature of angels—They never neglected "so great salvation"—They never refused a pardon—It was never offered them.

Ah! said Simeon as he delivered back the adorable babe into the arms of his mother—"This child is set for the falling and rising again of many in Israel." The same may be said of the destiny of this young man. Some—oh! that it may be many!—Some will hail the hour they heard him, when they come to die, and the memory of it will delight them through all eternity. Others—may you all go home and ask "Lord is it I?" others will execrate the day he arrived among them. Of all the objects that will haunt their wretched imaginations hereafter, the chief will be the figure of this pulpit; and of all the food for the worm that never dies, and the fuel for the fire that never shall be quenched, the principal will be the sermons which he has delivered in vain from it. His ministry cannot be neutral. It must be a blessing or a curse. It cannot be inefficient. It must either kill or cure—save or destroy. "For we are unto God a sweet savour of Christ, in them that are saved, and in them that perish. To the one we are the savour of death unto death; and to the other the savour of life unto life: and who is sufficient for these things."

ANXIETY DIRECTED:

A SERMON,

PREACHED AUGUST 9, 1820, AT SALTER'S-HALL,

BEFORE

"THE HOME MISSIONARY SOCIETY,"

BY WILLIAM JAY.

TO THOMAS TOMPSON, ESQ. TREASURER TO "THE HOME MISSIONARY SOCIETY;"

One of its first movers, and most zealous and liberal supporters; as also the impartial friend of every institution, that keeps in view the welfare of man, and the glory of God our Saviour: This Sermon, as a token of respect for his character, and from a wish to recommend his example; is affectionately dedicated by THE AUTHOR.

"*I would have you without carefulness. He that is unmarried careth for the things that belong to the Lord, how he may please the Lord: but he that is married careth for the things that are of the world, how he may please his wife.*"—1 Cor. vii. 32, 33.

MARRIAGE may be a very bad thing, or it may prove a very good thing. It is capable of producing numberless advantages, or of entailing miseries, of which death only is the cure: and as to some of them, not even this. In the very nature of the ordinance, it cannot be an indifferent event—it must have a very commanding influence over our character and our condition. And hence the Scripture is so frequent and particular in its references to it.

Yet, momentous as the subject is, I appear not before you this morning, to deliver a lecture on marriage. I am not going to lead you to the altar, but to the cross. I am not going to inquire in what manner, or at what period, you should enter wedded life. I am not going to determine, whether he that marrieth doth well, or he that marrieth not doth better—but to "beseech you, brethren, and exhort you by the Lord Jesus, that as ye have received of us, how ye ought to walk and please God, so ye would abound more and more."

It may not however be improper to observe, that the apostle is not here opposing or depreciating marriage, *in itself*. Indeed no one of the sacred writers, has said so much in commendation of it. He tells us that "marriage is honourable in all:" and makes no scruple to rank the "forbidding to marry," among "the doctrines of devils."—But he is referring to a peculiar condition of the church. The avoiding it, if practicable, "is," says the apostle, "good for the present distress." That is: it was a season of persecution. Many were deprived of their substance; expelled from their houses; and had no certain dwelling-place—and "wo to them that are with child, and to them that give suck in those days." Many also were called to lead an evangelizing or missionary life. They were to cross seas, to travel from province to province, and from country to country—flying like angels, "having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell upon the earth, and to every nation, and kindred,

and tongue, and people." Now suppose them married, in such a case as this. It is easy to see, that—if they took their wives and children along with them, they would prove a hinderance; or if they left them behind, a source of anxiety. Upon this principle, the two leaders of methodism should have remained single.—Their plan of life was inconsistent with the advantages and duties of the married state. Accordingly neither of them was happy in it. For the same reason, a preacher while labouring, as an itinerant, should forbear the condition; because he must live in the violation or neglect of those attentions, which the Bible enjoins upon him, as a master, a father, a husband, who is "to dwell with his wife according to knowledge." Hence, says the Apostle, "I would have you without carefulness."

Yea, further, the apostle admits that where there is a disposition to marry, it *should be repressed on a religious ground only.* For why would he have them without carefulness? "He that is unmarried careth for the things of the Lord, how he may please the Lord." He scorns to mention as an objection, the reason of the infidel, and the libertine—"That he may have more vicious freedom." Yea, he disdains to notice the excuse of those who remain solitary, "Because they shall be under less obligation to labour, and incur fewer difficulties and inconveniences." There are trials attached to every condition: and to make these the ground of declining the duties of wedded life, is selfish, sordid, unmanly, unchristian. No, says the apostle, if it be declined, let it be declined from a nobler principle, viz. That you may be more free to serve and honour the Lord. This is the rule by which his followers should always walk; this is the standard by which they should always judge.

Once more. He even allows that *when* a man has entered this state, *he ought to conform to it.* The gospel is not to draw him off from the claims of morality; nor is, even the saint or the minister, to encroach upon the husband. "He that is married careth for the things of the world, how he may please his wife."—Not without distinction and qualification—not in all things. If, like Eve, she would induce him to break a divine command: if she would draw him away from hearing the gospel, to attend a place of more fashionable divinity: if she would involve him in extravagance and expense, to rival neighbours in finery and show: if instead of being a keeper at home, she would be always exhibiting abroad, and in public:—here conscience must interpose: here a Saviour must be heard; "He that loveth—even his wife, more than me, is not worthy of me." But a man's chief attentions are due to the wife of his bosom. From the very nature of the alliance; from the confidence she has reposed in him; from the sacrifices she has made for him; and the nameless anxieties, pains, and perils, which attend the relation, on *her* side, she has peculiar and unrivalled titles to his regards. "No man," says our apostle—he does not say no monster: "no *man*, ever yet hated his own flesh, but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church." It is undeniable from our text itself, that it is the duty of a husband to please his wife: and it would not be difficult to prove that it is his interest too: for what case is there, in which the path of duty is not the path of safety?

But to our subject. It is this.

WE SHOULD ENDEAVOUR TO PLEASE THE LORD, BY BEING ALIVE TO HIS CONCERNS—"Caring for the things that belong unto the Lord." Our thoughts will divide themselves into four parts.

I. We shall observe, THAT THERE ARE THINGS WHICH PECULIARLY BELONG UNTO THE LORD.

II. We shall show, HOW THEY ARE TO ENGAGE OUR ATTENTION.

III. We shall explain, THE OBLIGATION WE ARE UNDER TO MAKE THEM THE OBJECTS OF OUR SOLICITUDE.

IV. We shall PARTICULARIZE WHAT HAS BEEN GENERAL IN OUR REFLECTIONS, AND COMMEND TO EVERY MAN'S CONSCIENCE IN THE SIGHT OF GOD, THE INSTITUTION WHICH HAS ASSEMBLED US TOGETHER.

I. THERE ARE THINGS WHICH PECULIARLY BELONG UNTO THE LORD. I say *peculiarly*, for "The shields of the earth belong unto the Lord." "The silver and the gold are his." "All the beasts of the forest are his, and the cattle upon a thousand hills." "The sea is his, and He made it; and his hands prepared the dry land." "The world is his, and the fulness thereof." All you behold in the immense regions of nature, pertains to Him by a right infinitely peculiar, and which He *cannot* transfer to another—the right of creation. For He made them all; and upholds them, by the word of his power.

And this applies to all your temporal possessions. You sometimes talk of your *property;* but the very word ought to be discarded from the Christian's vocabulary. You have no such thing as property; and you ought, in the place of it, to substitute the term trust. The Lord is the proprietor—you are only the stewards; and the summons is at the door, "Give account of thy stewardship, for thou shalt be no longer steward."

But these are not the things to which our apostle alludes. By "the things which belong unto the Lord," he means those which relate to his cause; and be it recollected, that when we speak of his cause, we are employing not what some call a cant term, but a sacred phraseology.—"Arise, O Lord," says David, "and plead thine own cause." He

has a cause; a cause in the most perfect sense his *own*, upon which his eye and his heart are continually, and which I hope is dearer to many now in his presence, than their own blood.

These things therefore include the Scriptures.—They are "the words of Christ;" a revelation from Him, and of Him.

They include the Sabbath.—This is expressly called, "the Lord's-day;" because established in honour of his resurrection from the dead, when "He entered into his rest, He also having ceased from his own works, as God did from his."

They include the sanctuary.—This is "the habitation of his house," "the place of his feet," which he has promised to make "glorious."

They include the ordinances of religion.—Baptism and the Lord's supper; these were instituted by Him, and designed to be memorials of Him.

They include the dispensation of the word by preaching.—For "when He ascended up on high, He received gifts for men, even for the rebellious also, that the Lord God might dwell among them; and He gave some apostles; and some prophets; and some evangelists; and some pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints; for the work of the ministry; for the edifying of the body of Christ: till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ."

They include the divers gifts and graces of the Holy Ghost.—For, says Peter, "*He* hath shed forth this which ye now see and hear." And "if any man," says Paul, "have not the spirit *of Christ*, he is none of his."

They include "the travail of his soul," by the sight of which he is "to be satisfied," and which is to be seen in the calling of sinners to "believe in his name; in having "a people for himself, to show forth his praise;" in "the going forth of his righteousness as brightness, and of his salvation as a lamp that burneth" till "the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the Lord, and "all shall know Him, from the least unto the greatest."

These, then, are the things which belong unto the Lord; and it would be delightful to enlarge, as well as to specify. But considering what we have yet before us, time forbids. I therefore leave them to your own meditation—if indeed you ever do meditate—and proceed

II. To show How these things are to engage your attention. You are to regard them even to *anxiety*—you are to *care for them*. Yea, you are to care for nothing else: "Be careful for *nothing*." You may *attend* to other things: but all your *anxiety* is bespoken, and must be sacred to the Lord's concerns only. It is, however, to be feared, that we completely *reverse* this maxim.

Let us enter into the subject; and let us indulge freely, in an inquiry which will be found to bear, not only on the proceedings of this day, but the whole course of our Christian profession. *How* is our anxiety for the things of the Lord to operate?

First. We are to care for them *personally* yet *extensively*. In a day when so many are strangely actuated to aid a cause which they cannot approve, and become the instruments of divine grace, without being its subjects; it can never be unnecessary to observe, that we must care for the things of the Lord, so as to know them, and love them, and enjoy them, and live under the influence of them, individually ourselves. It will be lamentable if our zeal glows at a distance, but grows dimmer as it approaches home, and goes out in a chilling darkness, between God and our own soul. It will be dreadful for a dying hour to induce the adoption of the complaint, "They made me keeper of the vineyards, but mine own vineyard have I not kept." We must resemble Joshua, whose resolution embraced personal as well as relative piety, and made the one go *before* the other: "As for me, *and* my house, we will serve the Lord." Indeed we must exemplify what we recommend, if we would not lose our labour, and expose ourselves to reproach. How can the proud enforce humility, or the covetous liberality? If you extol and urge a remedy as infallible, while death is seen pictured in your own countenance, people will think you are only trifling with them, or insulting them: "You do not," will they say, "believe one word of what you profess; if you did, you would try its efficacy on yourselves, and not languish under a disease, for which you pretend to claim a specific." In other words, if you talk of divine things, and endeavour to bring people under the sound of the gospel, while you are close-fisted and hard-hearted, malignant and unforgiving, proud and envious, vain in your conversation, and inconsistent in your conduct; they will conceive that your zeal regards only some curious notions, or the shibboleths of a party; and they will attach no importance to them, because they see you derive no benefit from them. He cannot value the soul of a fellow-creature, who despises his own; nor can he who is alienated from the life of God himself, earnestly, or even sincerely, beseech others to be reconciled unto Him.

Yet genuine religion is as social as it is personal; and while it teaches us to begin at home, it never allows us to end there. It not only commands, but enables us to "love our neighbour as ourselves."—Indeed, none but a Cain will ever ask, "Am I my brother's keeper." We must, therefore, not only be

solicitous to promote the cause of God in our own souls, but endeavour to advance it in our family circle, in the neighbourhood wherein we dwell, in the church to which we belong, in our own country, in every country; that his "way may be known on earth, his saving health among all nations." He is unworthy the name of a Christian, whose exertions are restricted by any bounds, but those of inability, or whose wishes are confined within any limits, but those of the globe.

Secondly.—We are to care for them *immediately*, yet *perseveringly*. "God commanded me to make haste," was the language of the king of Egypt to Josiah. In *his* lips it was a falsehood; but there cannot be a greater truth in the mouth of every minister and every Christian. God *has* commanded *us* to make haste. "The king's business requires haste"—how much more do the affairs of *Him*, who is the "King of kings, and the Lord of lords; the true and only Potentate?" Delay, hesitation, reluctance, are inconsistent with the greatness of the Being we avowedly serve. Besides, we have no time for procrastination. Our life is a vapour which appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away. And it is as uncertain as it is short. Yet all our opportunities of usefulness depend upon it; and many of them may expire long before it. The tide offers to subserve our welfare, but it will not wait for our convenience. The summer is short, but the harvest is much shorter; and every day, and every week, *in* harvest, is not equally propitious for action. The golden grain is not only precious, but perishable; and while the idler sleeps, the treasure is destroyed. How many seasons and occasions of doing good can we all review, of which nothing now remains, but the sin and regret of neglect! What work are we yet often making for bitter repentance! Surely, conscience cannot be always easy. Surely, there are moments when we must exclaim, "We are verily guilty concerning our brother." How many have perished, and how many are perishing for ever, through our indifference!—

But it is not enough to commence, we must continue. The command is, "Be not weary in well doing, for in due time we shall reap, if we faint not." Here we have need of patience. The excitements of novelty soon wear off. The prayers offered in faith are not always immediately answered. The schemes of wisdom and benevolence do not always instantly take effect. The seed sown does not spring up the same day, or the same week: and when it appears, there is "first the blade, then the ear, and after that the full corn in the ear." "It is good," says the apostle, "to be *always* zealously affected in a good thing; and not only when I am *present* with you." Zeal, in order to be durable, must be founded in principle, and not dependent on emotions excited by circumstances; it must not rely on the eloquence of a sermon, or the sympathy of a public meeting: it must have a spring head, or like the summer brook, it will sometimes flow, and sometimes fail.

We read of some who "did run well, but were hindered," "they began in the Spirit, but ended in the flesh." And we are informed of some, who obtain the commendation, "Thou hast laboured, and hast not fainted. I know thy works, and the last to be more than the first." I need not say to which of these it becomes you to be conformed.—You must say "I love my master. I will not go free." Your ears must be bored. You must be nailed to the door of your Lord's dwelling; and be his servant for ever. "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life."

Thirdly.—We are to care for them *openly* yet *simply*. It has often been objected to those who are trying to carry on the work of Christ, like you, my brethren, that they make so much noise and show. I trust you will never make more noise and show than are unavoidable. But unavoidable in a measure they are. The wind cannot blow without your hearing the sound thereof. The sun cannot illuminate, and warm, and fertilize, and bless, without shining, nor can it shine without being seen. But effects are not always motives. Little comparatively can be done in any matter of enterprise, by detached efforts: there must be combination, and combination cannot act with the privacy of individuality. The mountain is made up of sands; but though a sand can be hid, a mountain cannot. A single soldier may conceal himself, but an army cannot muster, and march, and contend, and conquer, without display. And publicity is desirable, as well as unavoidable: it awakens attention; it genders sympathy; it reproaches sloth; it weakens fear and shame; it kindles emulation.

Yet it must be confessed, that there is no little danger here, as to the agents themselves: and it is much more necessary to examine our principles, and watch over our motives, when we are called to act on the theatre of observation, than when we are discharging in private, duties which none, or few can witness, but God only. Jehu was apparently very zealous, but ostentation spoiled all—"Come see my zeal for the Lord of hosts." But it was only selfishness in a religious mantle. If he did the Lord's work, it was not for the Lord's sake. He saw that his obedience to a divine intimation, was the road to preferment, and a ladder to the throne. While therefore your zeal is public, let it be also pure: no longer than your eye is single, will your whole body be full of light. Never think of a *name*, as a founder, or a leader, an

agent, or a contributor. Let no carnal aims ever degrade and pollute your religious exertions: but "live in the spirit, and walk in the spirit." "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works," yet not to "glorify" you, but your "Father which is in heaven!"

We must care for them *boldly* yet *wisely*. In some conditions courage would not be necessary; but it is otherwise where immensely the majority are averse to our object, and striving to support a contrary interest. "Who will rise up for me against the evil doers; who will stand up for me against the workers of iniquity?" is an address, that supposes opposition, and even invites to contention. Here the man is prepared for nothing, who cannot rise above the influence of fear and shame: and say—

> "Careless myself a dying man,
> Of dying men's esteem:
> Happy, O God, if Thou approve,
> Though all beside condemn."

Some will suspect your motives; and some will censure them; some will sneer; and some will curse. You may be opposed by those above you, and whose example will have the force of authority; and you may be opposed by those who are dear to you, and whose example will have the force of affection: and the persecution of entreaties and tears, is to an ingenuous mind, the greatest of all trials. You must therefore feel every moment the conviction, "We ought to obey God rather than man." You must cherish the spirit of a martyr, though not called to his sufferings. You must be willing to "go forth to Him without the camp, bearing his reproach;" and be determined to "follow Him whithersoever He goeth!" And if your faith is considered as fancy, your hope delusion, your meekness meanness, your ardour folly or madness; you must take the scandal, and binding it as an ornament around your brow, exclaim, "If this is to be vile, I will yet be more vile:" and "Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life or by death."

But boldness may be accompanied by ignorance and rashness. You will, therefore, allow me to say, let your firmness and earnestness be blended with discretion. This is not to check, or chill your zeal, but to refine it, and guide it, and keep it from expending itself uselessly or injuriously. The religion of Jesus does not sanctify all the means that may be employed for its promotion; nor must we do evil that good may come. We are to give, but it must be our own: he abhors robbery for a burnt offering. We are to compel people to come in; but it must be by instruction, entreaty, and persuasion: all force is persecution. We are to contend earnestly for the faith; but we must strive carefully; the very nature of the cause rejects a pen dipped in gall, or a tongue set on fire of hell: "The wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God." "No one was ever yet," says Cowper, "scolded out of his sins, or into his duty." We are to hold forth the word of life, but we are not to leave our callings in which we are called of God, but to "abide with God" in them.

There are some, whose zeal, like a fever, burns up the brain, instead of generally warming the constitution, like the heat of health. We must study men and things: we must observe times, and circumstances. We must please our neighbour for his good to edification. "He that winneth souls is wise." There are preachers and professors, who despise and disdain every thing like conciliation and accommodation, as if it argued a want of fortitude and fidelity—or was a base and unworthy tampering with the enemy, to betray the cause. But who was it that said, "Walk in wisdom toward them that are without." And did not his practice exemplify and enforce this doctrine? "Even so I please all men, not seeking my own profit, but the profit of many, that they may be saved." "For though I be free from all, yet have I made myself servant unto all, that I might gain the more. To the weak became I as weak, that I might gain the weak: I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some."

We have a greater than Paul; and *his* example ought to have the force of a law. The whole of our Saviour's conversation and conduct was a fulfilment of the prediction, "Behold, my servant shall deal prudently." When He commissioned the twelve apostles, He said, "Be ye wise as serpents, as well as harmless as doves"—and we cannot have too much of the wisdom of the serpent, if we have none of his venom. And when He sent forth the seventy disciples, almost all his admonitions were of a prudential kind; and some of them such, as many a young divine would think it beneath him to regard, were they to constitute (and they ought to constitute) a part of a tutor's charge. But our Lord knew that things trifling in themselves became very important by their connexions, indications, and effects. He knew, that without prudence, a man can give no pledge of proper behaviour, in any of those trying situations which are perpetually occurring; yea, that his very excellencies may injure his character, and his very talents frustrate his usefulness.

Finally; we must care for them *humbly*, and yet *practically*. "Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it; except the Lord keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain." The wisest plans, the most strenuous efforts, the most powerful means, will be unavailing without his blessing. If you had Paul and Apollos to employ in your mission; Paul would plant, and Apol-

los would water, in vain, unless the Lord gave the increase. To this conviction, the glory of God requires Him to bring us: and the sooner we feel it the better, for when we are weak then are we strong. At every step, therefore, remember the declaration, "Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the Lord." Labour upon your knees. Let your care for the things of the Lord operate constantly in a way of prayer; and whatever be your advantages and instruments, breathe over them the dependence of David, "O Lord, I beseech Thee, send now prosperity."

It has been said, that exertion without prayer is impiety; but it is no less true, that prayer without exertion is hypocrisy. It is not, therefore, sufficient to pray—the sincerity of your prayers must be evinced by your actions: for of this we may be assured, that whatever a man really desires, and in proportion as he desires it, he will seek after, and use all the means placed within his power, to obtain. Out of their own mouths, therefore, many will be condemned—yea, they are condemned already.—They pray—but they *do* nothing. They avail not themselves of the opportunities which the providence of God presents; they call not into action the resources under their control; they never deny themselves, never retrench, in order to increase their capacity for usefulness. They *talk* enough of the cause of God; but they "flatter Him with their lips, and lie unto Him with their tongues." "With their mouth they show much love, but their heart goeth after their covetousness."

Thus are we to care for the things that belong unto the Lord: and we hasten

III. To explain the obligation we are under, to make them the objects of our solicitude.

And first.—Does not *consistency* require it? "He that saith he abideth in Him, ought himself also so to walk even as He walked." In these words we are reminded, that our practice should correspond with our profession. It is required, it is expected: it is expected by the world as well as by the church: we cannot maintain our character without it; for we shall always be judged of by our pretensions.

Now see how this applies in the case before us.—You are the professors of Christ. You profess to be his servants—but can you be good servants if negligent in your master's work. You profess to be his subjects—but can ye be loyal subjects if ye are regardless of your sovereign's honour? You profess to be his friends—but can you be faithful friends, unless you feel attached to your friend's interests, and make his welfare your own?

Secondly.—Does not *reason* require it? The things *themselves*, are the most excellent, and valuable, and important, and essential. We are careful about many objects, which are wholly unworthy of the ardour we expend upon them: but here our solicitude can never become excessive—can never reach the subject. In deciding this, I refer you to a dying hour.

"Men *may live* fools, but fools they *cannot die*."—The delusions of time drop off at the approach of eternity; and things begin to appear what they really are. In that solemn period, you will wonder by what process of deception, certain objects could acquire their influence over you; and you will be ashamed of the exertions and sacrifices you made to obtain them. You will equally wonder, how other things could have been neglected or forgotten: for they are then, deemed all in all. Life in the review is seen a dull level, or a dread darkness: nothing rises up, nothing shines with glory, but what we have done in working the work of God. All is acknowledged lost labour, but the care of the soul. All is felt to be vanity and vexation of spirit, but the earnests of the Spirit.

How different are the views and feelings of angels and men. *We* are struck with the merchant, the philosopher, the prince, the hero: *they* gaze with pleasure on the missionary; on the Sunday-school teacher, that is seeking to save the children of the needy; on the brokenhearted penitent, crying, "God be merciful to me a sinner." We are attracted by the wonders of nature, and the productions of art: they desire to "look into the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow." We exult in a victory: they "rejoice over one sinner that repenteth." We celebrate the birth of a Wellington, and they the birth of a Whitefield—for they "look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal."

What am I saying! God himself cares for these things. In *his* judgment they are of the highest moment. For what purpose did He make this earth, and for what purpose does He continue it? To be a field of slaughter for heroes? A counting-house for merchants? A laboratory for chemits? An observatory for astronomers! No—but to be a theatre, in which to display redeeming grace; a temple, in which to proclaim the glad tidings of salvation; a school, in which to train up the heirs of life, for glory, honour, and immortality. In these things He delights. These are his glory. To these He makes every thing else subordinate and subservient. To these every thing else must bend, or He will trample it under foot: "The nation and kingdom that will not serve Thee shall perish." These shall see the "sun turned into darkness, and the moon into blood," survive the wreck of the universe: and flourish for

ever in the "new heavens and the new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness."

Thirdly.—Does not *self-interest* require it? If concerned for your own welfare, you will surely feel the wisdom of pleasing Him, in whose favour is life: who has the control of all hearts, and the direction of all events; whose are the deceived and the deceiver, the showers and floods, the winds and seasons: who can withhold, or curse your blessings; and on whom entirely depend the success of your business, the safety of your family, the health of your body, and the prosperity of your soul. But "with such sacrifices God is well pleased." And what a monarch is reported to have once said to a prime minister, He says to each of you, "Mind my affairs, and I will mind yours."—"He that watereth shall be watered also:" "He that soweth plentifully shall reap plentifully." You have read the announcement of Heaven, "Them that honour me I will honour, but they that despise me shall be lightly esteemed." You have heard the threatening, "Curse ye Meroz, said the angel of the Lord, curse ye bitterly the inhabitants thereof; because they came not to the help of the Lord, to the help of the Lord against the mighty." Now turn to the promise, "They shall prosper that love thee." After the death of Uzziah no one seemed willing to admit the ark. Some were afraid. Others were actuated by selfishness. They weighed the expense, and the trouble. "We shall always be exposed and incommoded; all the people will be coming here from curiosity, to see, or from piety to inquire."—"Well," says Obededom, "let it turn in to me—I shall deem it an honour and a privilege." And a privilege it proved; the report soon reached even the foot of the throne; and had its influence there. "And it was told king David, saying, the Lord hath blessed the house of Obededom, and all that pertaineth unto him, because of the ark of God. So David went and brought up the ark of God, from the house of Obededom, into the city of David with gladness."

Now turn for contrast, to those selfish wretches, who had come back from Babylon to Jerusalem. They pretended that the time was not come for the house of the Lord to be built: yet while the Lord's house was lying in ruins, they had reared and were occupying ceiled houses of their own. And what did they gain by "all seeking their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ's?" "Ye looked for much, and lo it came to little; and when ye brought it home, I did blow upon it. Why, saith the Lord of hosts. Because of mine house that is waste, and ye run every man unto his own house. Therefore the heaven over you is stayed from dew, and the earth is stayed from her fruit. Thus saith the Lord of hosts, consider your ways. Go up to the mountain, and bring wood, and build the house: and I will take pleasure in it, and I will be glorified saith the Lord. Consider now from this day and upward, from the four and twentieth day of the ninth month, even from the day that the foundation of the Lord's temple was laid, consider it. Is the seed yet in the barn? yea, as yet the vine, and the fig-tree, and the pomegranate, and the olive-tree, hath not brought forth: from this day will I bless you."

Lastly.—*Gratitude* requires it. Fear does something in a Christian; hope does more; but love does most of all: and love seeketh not her own. When Achilles was asked, what were the most pleasing services in which he ever engaged, he replied, "What I do for my friends." "Nothing," says Augustine, "is irksome or difficult to love." Love is strong as death. Many waters cannot quench love, neither can the floods drown it. If a man would give all the substance of his house for love, it would be utterly contemned. But there is no love like that which a redeemed sinner bears to his Redeemer: and there ought to be no love like it. He, whom you are required to serve has always been serving you. His mercies have been new every morning, and every moment. He has never been weary in doing you good, notwithstanding all your unworthiness, and perverseness. He for whose things you are required to care, has incessantly cared for you. He has cared for your condition, cared for your family, cared for your bodies, cared for your souls. He remembers you now He is in his kingdom; and is making all things to work together for your good. What has He not insured to you by promise? What has He not done for you already? He met you when going astray, and turned your feet into the path of peace. He opened your blind eyes. He relieved your burdened consciences. He delivered you from the bondage of corruption, and brought you into the glorious liberty of the sons of God.

And *how* did He, all this? You sometimes talk of your benevolence; but how little of it will bear examination? How much of it is merely casual? How much of it is selfish, originating in some reference, to your reputation or advantage? How little of it has been attended with any thing like self-denial, or sacrifice? Perhaps, you have never lost a night's rest, or walked six miles in a warm day, to help a fellow-creature in your lives. And yet because you have now and then given a trifle of what you could not expend upon yourselves, you are forsooth generous. You look after returns of gratitude, and if you meet with no suitable acknowledgment, you are filled with resentment, and discontinue your kindness. O call, this morning—call to remembrance *Him*, who when He was rich, for our sakes became poor; who laid aside the sovereign, and took upon Him the form

of a servant; who for three and thirty years "was a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief; and died that we may live." View Him in the manger, view Him in the garden, view Him on the cross—

> "See from his head, his hands, his feet,
> Sorrow and love flow mingled down;
> Did e'er such love and sorrow meet,
> Or thorns compose so rich a crown."

—And surely every feeling of the heart must constrain you to exclaim—

> "To Thee, to Thee, Almighty Love,
> Our souls, ourselves, our all, we pay;
> Millions of tongues shall sound thy praise,
> On the bright hills of heavenly day."

We have now in the

IVth place, To PARTICULARIZE WHAT HAS BEEN GENERAL IN OUR REFLECTIONS, AND TO COMMEND TO EVERY MAN'S CONSCIENCE IN THE SIGHT OF GOD, THE INSTITUTION WHICH HAS ASSEMBLED US TOGETHER. It is the HOME MISSIONARY SOCIETY. And here I cannot but remark, that the very title is auspicious, and auspicious not only in its reference, as we shall presently evince, but even in its implication. For the word HOME Mission, naturally leads us to think of a FOREIGN: and a Society for sending the gospel abroad, has been now established for many years: and none can rejoice in its operations and success, more than ourselves.*

But we request a patient and candid hearing, while we mildly, but firmly contend, that as the Foreign Missionary Society does not supersede the Home Missionary Society; so the latter does not interfere with the former. The one, therefore, should not awaken the jealousy, or occasion the distance of the other. We go further, and are not afraid to affirm, that the one is entitled to the respect and co-operation of the other. It has a threefold claim. First, The claim of a sister. The one is of the same family with the other; and engaged in the same glorious cause of doing good, though not in the same department. Secondly, The claim of a child. It would be very easy to prove that the one grew out of the other. And the effect was natural and unavoidable. Such a number of preachers and people could not be called together, and urged to think of the danger of those who were perishing for lack of knowledge abroad, without being led to reflect also, upon the condition of those, in the same state, *as to effect*, nearer home. They could not but say, "We must feel, and act consistently: and not expose ourselves to the reflection, Physician, heal thyself: what we have heard done in Capernaum, do also in thy own country." Hence from those annual convocations, ministers returned determined to explore the villages around them. Hence new county associations were formed, and the old ones acquired an ardour unknown before; and instead of these half-yearly meetings being made days of smoking and preaching, they were converted into days of public excitement and private inquiry, in order to evangelize the respective districts. Hence sprang The Tract Society. Hence The Bible Society, which from the beginning was called "British," as well as "Foreign." Hence arose The Hibernian Society: The Irish Evangelical Institution—and to mention no more, last of all, The Home Missionary Society also. Thirdly, the claim of a friend. For not only is this society related to the other, and descended from it, but is designed and adapted to aid it too. Every *convert* made by its efforts, will become a lover of The Missionary Society—and will pray for it—and, if able, contribute to its support. Every new *interest* raised by its efforts, will be according to its extent, a magazine of resources. Every *preacher* produced by its efforts, will become an official advocate, and be empowered to render it, by his sermons as well as his life, important service. And is even *this* an impossible, or an improbable result? It is not delicate for a speaker to refer to himself—otherwise, it might be observed, that your preacher this morning, was the fruit of village preaching, and preaching of a very humble kind too. Three others also, by the same means, were called to labour in the word and doctrine, out of the same obscure vicinity. Yea, not a few of the most acceptable and useful ministers of the day, have been called forth by the very kind of exertion which your society patronizes, employs, and excites: and these have been, and will be, the instruments of recommending the Missionary Society, and of collecting no inconsiderable sums for its use.

But your Institution, my brethren, is to be viewed under other aspects.

It is enforced by *patriotism*. "As we have opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them that are of the household of faith." It cannot be pleaded, that the objects contemplated by your Society, are at present, of the household of faith: but the apostle's language sufficiently shows us, that there is no incompatibility between public and universal benevolence, and private and particular regards. Indeed the one is the safest, and the nearest road to the other. The best, the only way in which we can promote the welfare of the whole, is by benefiting the parts; for the aggregate is made up of individuals. Paul therefore would not blame us for feeling *peculiarly*, when an Institution invites us to go and bless, not our fellow-creatures only, but our fellow-subjects; not

* There are several societies now, for sending the gospel to the heathen: there is one in almost every denomination. But the preacher adverts only to the London Missionary Society; not from illiberality, but because the persons he addressed were principally connected with it. Yet, what is advanced, will apply to the friends of every other Foreign Missionary Society, and tend to conciliate them to home-efforts.

strangers only, but neighbours. Yea, he himself felt in like manner—"Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel, is, that they might be saved. I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart: for I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ, for my kinsmen, my brethren according to the flesh." I have nothing to do at present with the difficulty of this passage: I advert only to its patriotism; and this remains the same upon every principle of interpretation.

Abhorred indeed, be the patriotism, that would lead us to justify any thing evil, because done in our own country; or render us blind to the excellencies of any other nation; or make us envious of their improvements and advantages; or induce us to consider any of the human race our natural enemies, because they live on the other side of a mountain, or a sea—but it is in the order of morality, and in the very principles of our nature, to feel attachments arising from the places of our birth; from the impressions of our infancy and youth; from the memory of a thousand pleasing associations; from the presence, the attentions, the claims, of all the near and touching connexions of life.

And surely, never was there a country so worthy of our regard, as this highly favoured isle in which we dwell. We have indeed much to lament, and much to censure: but "it is a good land which the Lord our God giveth us."

> "England, with all thy faults,
> I love thee still."—

But what is the best evidence we can give of our love to it? "He is worthy," said the Jews to our Lord, when speaking in favour of the centurion, "He is worthy for whom Thou shouldst do this, for he loveth our nation, and hath built us a synagogue." "Righteousness," says Solomon, "exalteth a nation; but sin is the reproach of any people." He is therefore the best friend to his country, who promotes most its moral and religious improvement. To such endeavours it is always entitled, but the present period has peculiar claims upon our patriotism. It must be confessed, that there is much infidelity and profligacy abounding: it is not to be denied or concealed, that there is prevailing much licentiousness of political opinion, much disaffection to government, much readiness, if not ripeness, for sedition and rebellion, among the lower classes. Is it not then desirable, and necessary to bring them into fellowship with that gospel, which will teach them to "deny ungodliness and worldly lusts;" to "fear God and honour the king;" "to obey magistrates, and to be ready to every good work?"—The distress of the country also at this season, is another powerful call to patriotic exertion. Many are not aware of the sufferings of the poor, unless in general rumour, which obtains slight credit, and produces little impression. But some of us, especially in the discharge of such duties as this Society intends, have opportunities to observe their extent and degree. How destitute of comfort, of attendance, of accommodation, of conveniences, of needful supplies, are many of the aged and the sick. How many infantile cries for relief, pierce and agonize a father's, a mother's ear in vain? How many are there, who never touch a morsel of meat of their own, from one month to another; yea, whose homely board is frequently spread with the most common vegetables, unaccompanied not only with meat, but even bread and salt! How many are there, wretchedly apparelled, as well as starvingly fed, and who by a sense of decency, stronger than their feeling of piety, are ashamed to appear at church. How many are there, who when He sendeth abroad his ice like morsels, and *you* exclaim, "who can stand before his cold?" encounter the adversity in tattered garments, through paneless windows, and with scanty, casually collected, pilfered fuel? How many are heard begging—for what?—Labour, toil, drudgery! My God! what a state of society is that in which, what was originally pronounced as a curse—"In the sweat of thy brow thou shalt eat bread, till thou return to the dust:" is prized and implored as a *boon;* and implored too in vain! O my countrymen, if your complaints reach not the ears of the great, they shall, by our prayers for you, enter into the ears of the Lord God of Sabaoth. We sympathize with you, and will do, whatever falls within our power for your temporal relief: but the more despair we feel with regard to your secular comfort, the more will we be mindful of your higher welfare; the more will we be concerned to bring the kingdom of God nigh unto you; the more earnestly will we hasten to open to you, in your penury and wretchedness, the treasures of eternity, and the comforts of the Holy Ghost: and whatever be denied you, again shall it be said, "The poor have the gospel preached unto them."

Facility is another argument we bring forward in favour of this society. We are far from intimating that we are to decline a duty to which we are called, because it is attended with difficulty: but who does not acknowledge, that we must be peculiarly culpable, when in a matter of importance, we omit to do what is easy in achievement, and refuse to gather what depends within our reach. If we are under obligation to accomplish all the good in our power, our rule of action, if not our motive, must often be derived from the preferableness of means, the favourableness of opportunity, the prospect of resources, and the probability of success.

It would be strange if an army were to go forward, leaving strong holds and encampments behind, endangering its communications and supplies, in order to begin at the greatest distance, and fight their way home. If you had to prepare a passage through a wood, you would hardly think of commencing at the remotest side, so as to reach the spot of action, continually by taking a large circuit, or pressing through the bushes and the brambles: you would be aware of the advantage of beginning near, where access would be easy, and all the progress made, would be a preparation for more. "Doth he speak parables?" Christians imbodied are the Lord's host. They are also his pioneers, to "make strait in the desert a highway for our God." Let us turn from analogy to fact. What was the order our Saviour gave to the twelve? "Go ye into all the world, preaching repentance and remission of sins, in my name, among *all* nations, *beginning at Jerusalem.*" Here we have both a foreign and a home mission: and they are not considered inconsistent with each other: but what is still more to our purpose—the one follows the other; and the distant is not to work towards the nearer, but the nearer is to extend into the distant. This order the apostles observed. They "testified *both* to Jews and Greeks," but to the Jews always "first." There are many worthy projects on foot—and may God succeed them! which *must* require *much* time and *vast* expense. But *your* instruments are comparatively cheap. Your object consumes not months to approach it. The fields white unto your harvest are within a day's journey, or an hour's walk; they wave their ripeness just beyond your garden hedge, and are full in view from the window of your closet, where as you gaze, a Being cries, "Work while it is day, the night cometh wherein no man can work."

Much may be also urged on the ground of *necessity.* Of this, many of you, my London friends, shall I say, are happily incompetent to judge. You reside in a city where you are fed to the full, and have never been familiar with those places in which many are dying of spiritual want. I wish you could attend some of our public meetings in the country. I wish you could hear the reports of our holy informers. I wish you could witness the applications for assistance, which we are compelled to refuse, for want of means. I wish you could take a few rides with some of our ministers into the remoter parts of our districts, and see the state of our villages; the neglect of public worship; the profanation of the Sabbath; the carelessness, stupidity, ignorance, heathenism, of the cottages; the neglect and barbarism, in which the children are rising up to be the bane and the curse of society.

"But is there," it will be said, "is there not provision made to remedy this evil?" "Are there not Bibles in abundance?" There are. But many are unable to peruse them—and must be taught to read, or the book is sealed. Many are careless about the Scripture, because they are not in a state to feel the importance of its grand subject—Jesus Christ and him crucified—and must be awakened and convinced, in order to bring them to the prophets and apostles, asking, "What must I do to be saved?"

"But there is the excellent liturgy every where read?" It is excellent. But can any advocate for it, however partial he may be, deny that there are thousands to be found, who though continually hearing it, are not only deplorably profligate, but ignorant too? It is not by the constant repetition of even a form of sound words, but by "the foolishness of preaching, that God saves them that believe."

"The clergy where are they?" Had this question been asked in the days of Isaiah, the reply would have been: "His watchmen are blind, they are all dumb dogs, they cannot bark: sleeping, lying down, loving to slumber. Yea, they are greedy dogs, which can never have enough; and they are shepherds that cannot understand: they all look to their own way, every one for his gain, from his quarter." We are thankful that this is not generally our case. Yet too many who are paid by the state, are careless of their charge: while others, more willingly disposed, are fettered by forms, and are obliged to restrain the zeal, which would draw on them the reproach of innovation.

"But is not the meeting free?" Yes: and we may "call every man his neighbour, under his vine and under his fig-tree: and none can make us afraid." But there are inward restraints where there are no external preventions. What can be expected from those who have denied the Lord that bought them, and have renounced in Christianity, all that is vital and animating? There are not only impediments arising from error, but also from indolence, and indifference, and pride, even where the truth as it is in Jesus is professed. Some, I am afraid, even of our own ministers, find it more grateful to visit the rich, than to preach to the needy. Some think it beneath them, or at least not so reputable, to preach in the barn, or in the cottage. Some prefer the elegance of the study, to the rudeness of the village; and are polishing their periods, when they shall be going after that which is lost, until they find it.

"But of late there has been a great increase of evangelical and zealous dissenterism; and the establishment numbers a growing accession of pious and devoted ministers; and the methodists have also spread far and wide." Admitted. Yet could you compare all this varied system of agencies, with the

wideness and work of the field, you would yet say, "The harvest truly is great, and the labourers are few. Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth labourers into the harvest."

This state of things, so earnestly demanding increased exertion, had for several years back, much impressed the minds of our ministers, and associations in the country: and without the least cooling of regard for foreign service, they were anxious in their inquiries what more could be done at home. Something had been effected for this purpose in the city of my residence. The united congregations there, formed an establishment, called "The Bath British and Foreign Missionary Society;" dividing its income into three equal parts: one being appropriated to the heathen; one to Ireland; and one to our own neighbourhood. The rising up of your Society therefore, could not but be deemed seasonable, and hailed by thousands as desirable.

And I need not say that you have met with *encouragement*. Your beginning indeed was small, compared with the wishes and hopes of its friends, but it was not so small as the beginning of The Bible Society, or the beginning of Protestantism, or of Christianity itself. And the mustard seed shall become a mustard tree, and the birds of the air lodge in the branches of it.

As yet you have not many great names in your lists: but I see one name among you, which of itself is enough to confer dignity, and insure success—a name above every name—the Lord of Life and Glory, who cries, "So will I save you, and ye shall be a blessing; fear not, but let your hands be strong."

The Institution is but a year old; and yet it has sent forth, and is supporting, no less than ten missionaries.

You are continually receiving expressions of approbation, and promises of co-operation from ministers, and churches, and combinations of both.

Your funds need replenishing and enlargement. But the supplies you have received have been encouraging; and they are increasing. And I am persuaded you will obtain no inconsiderable assistance, from the collection which is going to be made in favour of your object, at the doors of this sanctuary. For more than thirty-two years I have been accustomed to appeal to the liberality of London congregations, and I have always had reason to approve and applaud. And I am sure you will not dissent from your own example this morning. I never recommended an object with more cordiality. In no case could you give with a greater likelihood of usefulness: and charity to the soul, is the soul of charity. The good you may be the means of accomplishing, you may never be informed of here: but you will make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness: and when ye fail, they will receive you into everlasting habitations; and you will hear them for ever adoring the God of all grace, who led you to pity them, when no man cared for their souls.

Complain not of the number of these applications. It foretells, it implies good. Would you wish there was no cause for such calls? Would you wish for the same state of religious dulness and death, which prevailed in this country ninety years ago, and which would indeed, effectually preclude you from all these spiritual vexations? Have you not for years been praying that his kingdom may come, and that his word may have free course and be glorified? And are you displeased with God for hearkening to your petitions? Or did you imagine He would fulfil your requests by miracles, instead of means? Or did you indent with Him, that He should carry on the cause, but that you should be excused from the work?

You say "The times are trying, and we must economize." We have no objection to economy—we wish many had introduced it long ago—you cannot economize too much, if you run not into meanness and niggardliness. But we hope you will not *begin*, at least, with the part of your substance, which you have consecrated to beneficence. I hope you will see, what can be retrenched in servants, and table, and furniture, and dress, before you think of refusing the applications of those, who come to you in the behalf of perishing souls, and in the name of Him who loved us and gave himself for us.

NONE OF US LIVETH TO HIMSELF, AND NO ONE DIETH TO HIMSELF, BUT WHETHER WE LIVE, WE LIVE UNTO THE LORD, OR WHETHER WE DIE, WE DIE UNTO THE LORD: WHETHER, THEREFORE, WE LIVE OR DIE, WE ARE THE LORD'S.

FRIENDSHIP IN DEATH:

A DISCOURSE

SACRED TO THE MEMORY OF

SAMUEL HALLETT, Esq.

WHO DEPARTED THIS LIFE MAY 22, 1825.

PREACHED IN ARGYLE CHAPEL, BATH,

BY WILLIAM JAY.

ADVERTISEMENT.

From the age and infirmity of the Deceased, the Preacher frequently looked forward to the Service which produced the following Discourse; and he always foreboded it, as one of the most painful exercises in which he could ever be engaged. But he was not perplexed for a moment in selecting a subject for the occasion. As soon as he saw his friend going the way of all the earth, his feelings led him to the words of Thomas; and he found in the discussion, that the sentiment he had adopted for a text, was echoed from the bosoms of a numerous and weeping audience.

Sometimes, in sending abroad what he had delivered, he can truly say—he has reluctantly complied with the desire of others; but, in this instance, he was pleased with such an application,—not from a persuasion of the goodness of the Sermon, but from a conviction of the excellency of the character it attempted to pourtray; and from a wish that some likeness and memorial of him might be spread and perpetuated among his connexions; and from the gratification it would afford the Preacher, of thus publicly and permanently testifying how much he loved and esteemed the individual whose death called it forth.

Percy Place, June 1825.

"*Let us also go, that we may die with him.*"
John xi. 19.

This is the language of a man who bore two names—Thomas, and Didymus; the one Hebrew, the other Greek. Each signifies a twin; and probably he was one, and some peculiar circumstance attending his birth, gave rise to the denomination.

It is surely needless, not to say absurd, to look after a mystery here; and to suppose that he was so called, under the direction of Providence, in foresight of his having twins—flesh and spirit, faith and unbelief—in his heart.

In this way, however, a large portion of the Word of God is disposed of by the spiritualizers of the Bible, who, dissatisfied with the real and obvious import of revelation, turn its figures into facts and its facts into figures, just as it suits the exigency of their creed, or the weakness of their capacity. But they are bad interpreters of the Scripture, who give it meanings which it never had; and by their supposed ingenuity, render its readers uncertain whether it has any proper and determinate sense. At best we can only give these men credit for the goodness of their intention. They may think to improve the Scripture; but by their ennoblings they debase it, by their enrichings they impoverish it, by their enlargings they contract it. They may alter and they may add, but it would be better for them to have nothing to do with these finished paintings, or to present them as they are left by the hand of the matchless master.

The sovereignty of God appears in the

much greater notice the Scripture takes of some than of others. Little is said of Thomas. He was one of the Lord's apostles, and he is mentioned in three places; and mentioned as the sacred writers always mention characters: for they never write as censurers or eulogists, but state facts, whether they betray infirmity or excellence; and leave them to make their own impression and to supply their own improvements.—When the risen Saviour appeared to the eleven, Thomas was absent, and his absence occasioned a loss of conviction which the testimony of his brethren could not repair; but the Saviour repaired it, by his condescension in accommodating himself to his weakness, and inducing him to exclaim, "My Lord and my God."—At an earlier period, when our Saviour was delivering his farewell address to his disciples before he suffered, and when he had said, "Whither I go ye know, and the way ye know," Thomas saith unto him, "Lord, we know not whither thou goest, and how can we know the way?" Here was ignorance; but ignorance ingenuously confessed, and accompanied with a desire of information; and therefore Jesus said unto him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life; no man cometh unto the Father but by me. If ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also, and from henceforth ye know him and have seen him."—But the first time he is introduced, as a speaker, is in the words of the text. "Then," said Thomas, "who is called Didymus," unto his fellow-disciples, "LET US ALSO GO, THAT WE MAY DIE WITH HIM."

Here a difficulty occurs. It is not easy to determine whether Thomas alludes to our Saviour or to Lazarus. I confess, after repeated reflection, my own mind is yet unfixed. The connexion seems to leave it undecided: and if we appeal to authority, we find expositors of equal weight on each side of the question. It is singular, that while the candid Doddridge is so impressed with the former reference as not to mention the latter; the great and judicious Howe is so impressed with the latter as not even to mention the former. Both allusions, therefore, must have much probability in them, and as each is instructive and useful, let us consider the words:—

I. In connexion with our SAVIOUR: and

II. In connexion with LAZARUS.

The subject could never be unsuitable and uninteresting; but it will be found peculiarly appropriate this morning, when we are assembled together to pay—not the *last* token of respect: No,—but *a* token of respect; a *public* token of respect; a *deserved* token of respect; an *edifying* token of respect, to the memory of Samuel Hallett, so long a worshipper in *that* pew—a place which now knows him no more for ever; and for many years an honourable member and office-bearer in this church.

I. Then, we consider the words in connexion with our SAVIOUR. Here it will be necessary to observe, that our Lord had been twice at Jerusalem of late, and each time the Jews had evinced a disposition to kill him. From the past, it was natural for his disciples to fear for the future; and, therefore, when he said, "Let us go into Judea again," his disciples say unto him, "Master, the Jews of late sought to stone thee; and goest thou *thither* again? Jesus answered, Are there not twelve hours in the day? If any man walk in the day, he stumbleth not, because he seeth the light of this world. But if a man walk in the night, he stumbleth, because there is no light in him. These things said he: and after that he saith unto them, Our friend Lazarus sleepeth; but I go, that I may awake him out of sleep. Then said his disciples, Lord, if he sleep, he shall do well. Howbeit Jesus spake of his death: but they thought that he had spoken of taking of rest in sleep. Then said Jesus unto them plainly, Lazarus is dead. And I am glad for your sakes that I was not there, to the intent ye may believe; nevertheless let us go unto him."—Upon which, concluding that he would throw himself into certain jeopardy by this journey, and looking upon him as a dead man, Thomas said unto his fellow-disciples, "LET US ALSO GO, THAT WE MAY DIE WITH HIM." Here observe:—

First, That his apprehension was not verified. So far from it, Jesus was not only preserved but magnified; and Thomas and his companions saw his glory, and had their faith confirmed, and shared in the honour of being the disciples of such a master. Thus groundless are often our forebodings; and thus the Lord frequently reminds us of a trial and brings it nigh; but when our disposition appears, and like Abraham, we are willing to make the sacrifice, he exempts us from the enduring, and says, "It is well that it was in thine heart." For he looketh to the heart, and honours the design when it fails of execution—not for want of principle and zeal, but of means and opportunity. When we follow the world, we find disgrace where we promised ourselves glory; and bondage where we looked for liberty; and wretchedness where we sought for pleasure;—but in following the Lord Jesus, our fears are falsified, our hopes are surpassed, and he does for us exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think; according to his own decision, "whosoever will save his life shall lose it, and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it."

Secondly, Though however in this instance the event differed so widely from his anticipation, at length the time arrived that the Son of Man *was* betrayed and apprehended

in order to be put to death. And how did Thomas *then* behave himself?—*He* who had so heroically said, and said sincerely too, "LET US ALSO GO, THAT WE MAY DIE WITH HIM!" Was he willing *then* to follow him to prison and to death? "*Then all* the disciples forsook him and fled." Ah, Thomas! where are you now? Are you now confessing him before men? Are you now a companion with him in his bonds? Are you now soothing him by your sympathy? "He looked for some to take pity and there was none; and for comforters, and he found none." "Lord, what is man?" What a difference is there between an imaginary and a real conflict! "The children of Ephraim, being armed and carrying bows, turned back in the day of battle." What a difference between a warm frame and a heart established with grace! What can a man depend upon in the hour of temptation?—His professions? His resolutions? His former experience? "He that trusteth in his own heart is a fool." And what is he that trusts in his own grace? "*My* grace," says the Saviour,—not thine; "*My* grace is sufficient for thee." Be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. But

Thirdly. The disposition Thomas *now* expressed was such as well becomes every disciple of Jesus. Yet, they ought to feel that perfect love to him that casteth out fear; to be willing to follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth; to be ready to suffer with him the loss of all things; and to say with Paul, Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life or by death.—If we consider what he *commands*, this disposition is *obedience:* and has he not said, "If any man will be my disciple, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. He that forsaketh not all that he hath cannot be my disciple?"—If we consider what he has *done*, this disposition is gratitude. And what has he not done? He remembered us in our low estate. For our sakes, when rich he became poor. He died that we might live.—If we consider how *important and necessary* he is to us, this disposition is *wisdom.* And can we do for a moment without him?

> This flesh of mine might learn as soon
> To live, yet part with all my blood;
> To breathe when vital air is gone,
> Or thrive and grow without my food.

—If we consider him as *able and engaged to indemnify* us for all we can lose or suffer, this disposition is *self-interest.* And has he not said, "There is no man that hath left house, or parents, or brethren, or wife, or children, for the kingdom of God's sake, who shall not receive manifold more in this present time, and in the world to come life everlasting."—If we consider our *profession* of his name, this disposition is *self-consistency* —and are not his vows upon us? We have come to his table; we have joined ourselves to his people; we have opened our mouths unto the Lord, and we cannot go back.

Fourthly. We admire also his zeal in wishing to infuse his own spirit into his brethren, and to animate them to the same tone of holy and high resolution. "Let *us* go that *we* may die with him." Does this imply any indifference in those he addressed? Were the disciples turning aside and whispering among themselves about going forward? Were they hesitating through fear whether they should advance even with *him*, into the jaws of danger? It is possible, it is probable. Therefore, says St. Thomas, to his fellow-disciples, "What! shall we abandon such a master in the hour of trial? Shall we see him likely to be sacrificed and not rally around his Sacred Person? Shall we refuse the fellowship of his sufferings? Let us bare our bosoms to the same treatment. Let the same blow that strikes him strike us also." "LET US ALSO GO, THAT WE MAY DIE WITH HIM." For good men are not always in the same state of mind. They are not always themselves. There are cases in which nature seems ready to prevail over grace; and "Wo," says Solomon, "to him that is alone when he falleth, for there is not another to keep him up." Hence our Saviour sent forth the seventy disciples in pairs, not only to render their testimony stronger, but that they might watch over each other in temptation, and cheer each other in discouragement. Thus, "Jonathan went to David in the wood, and strengthened his hand in God." Thus "as iron sharpeneth iron, so doth the countenance of a man his friend." And hence we are commanded, like Thomas, to "strengthen the weak hands and confirm the feeble knees;" and to "*consider* one another, to *provoke* unto love and good works." We proceed,

II. To consider the words in connexion with LAZARUS. Jesus you will remember had plainly said, Lazarus is *dead;* but immediately added, "Nevertheless let us *go unto him.*"—Then said Thomas unto his fellow-disciples, "Well, since *he* is dead, LET US ALSO GO, THAT WE MAY DIE WITH HIM."—Thus uttering a sentiment, in some respects, perhaps, too passionately expressed, but which, I presume, appears perfectly natural; and has doubtless been felt by every individual in the hour of bereavement. And it implies four principles,—warmth of affection,—indifference to life,—powerful conviction,—and delightful hope.

First. Warmth of affection. Such there appears to have been between Lazarus and the disciples. Whoever was dear to Jesus was dear to them; "now Jesus loved Martha and her sister, and Lazarus." Also when speaking of him, he said, "*our* friend, Lazarus, sleepeth;" marking thereby their attachment, as well as his own. And the gradual and gentle manner in which he communica

ted the intelligence of his death, shows that he knew how deeply it would affect their minds. There was, it would seem, much also in Lazarus that was attractive. For it is not the death of every one that draws forth the exclamation, LET US ALSO GO, THAT WE MAY DIE WITH HIM. There are persons whose death would awaken no emotion but that of pleasure. "When," says Solomon, "the wicked perish, there is shouting." The neighbourhood feels it to be not a loss, but a riddance. If some were allowed again to return to life, they would find every avenue by which they could re-enter the world bolted and barred against them. But how would some be welcomed back again? How would many surround the mouth of the grave to hail them, and accompany them home with songs of praise? "For when the eye saw them, it blessed them; and when the ear heard them, it gave witness unto them; because they delivered the poor when he cried, the fatherless, and him that had no helper. The blessing of him that was ready to perish came upon them, and they caused the widow's heart to sing for joy."

All religious individuals do not intrench themselves deeply in the affections of others. The apostle makes a distinction between a good man, and a righteous man. "For scarcely for a righteous man will one die, yet peradventure for a good man some will even dare to die." It is goodness that wins the heart, and makes one man a god to another. And such a man was Lazarus; nor is it improbable but that the disciples were under peculiar obligations to his kindness and generosity; and thus gratitude mingled with friendship, to produce the language of endearment in the text.

We are made capable of affection; and he is unworthy the name of a man who is a stranger to it. It does the highest honour to our nature; and religion, so far from opposing it, sanctifies it, and increases it; and "by this," says our Saviour, "shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye love one another."

And can there be a stronger expression of love to any one than wishing to be near him —with him,—with him in life and—with him even in death? Paul tells the Corinthians, "I have you in my heart, both to live and to die with you." Ruth saith to Naomi, "Entreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee; for whither thou goest I will go; and where thou lodgest I will lodge: thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God; where thou diest will I die, and there will I be buried." Hear the dying patriarch when he had blessed his sons, "And he charged them, and said unto them, I am to be gathered unto my people: bury me with my fathers in the cave that is in the field of Ephron the Hittite; in the cave that is in the field Macphelah, which is before Mamre, in the land of Canaan, which Abraham bought with the field of Ephron the Hittite, for a possession of a burying-place. There they buried Abraham and Sarah his wife; there they buried Isaac and Rebekah his wife; and there I buried Leah." In vain persons ask for a reason to justify such a preference. He has no heart, who *can* ask. The sentiment is founded in our nature, and pervades every human bosom, unadulterated by "the god of this world."

But the strength of affection is evinced most strongly at the moment of separation. It is the want that teaches us the worth of our comforts. What we have securely, we hold loosely; but we take a firmer grasp when we feel that it is leaving us. When Elisha knew that his master was going to be taken from his head, how he prized the last interview. How determined was he to improve every moment, and therefore refused to go back though enjoined again and again.

"How mercies brighten as they take their flight."

You love your child; but it is when he is leaving you to take a long voyage, that parental tenderness overflows. You may value a mother, and treat her with every respect; but it is when she is embracing you for the last time, and you can no longer have access to the bosom that has been the asylum of your care and grief.—It is then that filial affection hallows her image, and says "my wound is incurable." When the object of our regard is separating from us, we feel many a tie of which we were not sensible, till the cords were touched. Then we fear and groan. Then even our past inattentions and little undutifulnesses endear the beloved the more. Then we forget all his imperfections, and remember and magnify his excellences; and a sacredness seems thrown all around him by death—"LET US ALSO GO, THAT WE MAY DIE WITH HIM."

Secondly. It implies indifference to life. To this we are commonly too much attached; not as a sphere of duty and usefulness, in which we may glorify God, and perform services to our fellow-creatures which we cannot perform in another world; but as a residence, a home, a portion. Yet since we must leave it, and leave it soon, it would be wise to be ready and willing to leave it: and there are moments in which the fascinations that charmed us are dissolved, and the ligatures that confined us slacken; and we say with Job, "I loathe it, I would not live always; let me alone, for my days are vanity." Afflictions in general have this detaching influence; but nothing so powerfully draws us off from every thing here, as the removal of an object in whose life our own is felt to be bound up, and whose departure seems to leave nothing worth staying for behind.

Dr. Young says,

Our hearts are fastened to the world
With strong and various ties;
But every trouble cuts a string,
And urges us to rise."

And well he adds,

"When Heav'n would set our spirits free,
And earth's enchantment end,
He takes the most effectual means,
And robs us of a friend."

And in another place,

"Our dying friends come o'er us like a cloud,
To cool our brainless ardours."

Ah! many of you have been through this scene, and have said, "Lover and friend hast thou put far from me, and mine acquaintance into darkness." Some of you perhaps have suffered from nearer claims. You have known the death of a father, in whom was combined all that was venerable and affectionate, all that was interesting and attractive. You watched the menacing of the disease; and your hope often revived and fainted again with the variation of the complaint. But when the physician intimated that further assistance was vain; when the voice and the more speaking eye said farewell; when in the deep and solemn silence that followed you felt plainly, "Lazarus is dead;" when you kissed the ice-cold cheek for the last time, before your treasure was screwed up for ever; when you saw the procession leaving the house to return no more; when at the grave you heard the sentence "dust to dust"—how changed, how desolate did every thing appear, did every thing feel! How incapable of rekindling former passions, of renewing former pursuits! How dead was the heart to avarice, to ambition, to envy! How loosely did life hang upon you!

We allow that the feeling at such a time may be carried too far. Weeping, says Henry, must not hinder sowing. We must not, because one comfort is gone, undervalue all our remaining mercies, and say, "Let God take all, now he has taken this." We think that we cannot do without such a friend or relation; but God tells us we *must*, and time and experience tell us we *may*. And it is well when the fractured vessel drives us nearer to the fountain, and we can say with David, "Now Lord, what wait I for? my hope is in Thee."

Yet, we are censured, we are condemned, if we do not lay it to heart, when the righteous perish, and merciful men are taken away. Yet there is an enlightened reason for our diminished regard for earth, in the loss of wise and good men. It is thereby impoverished. It is much less worthy of our esteem. There is less of truth, less of holiness, less of God's image here; and if all were gone, who would wish to tarry here a day longer? While, on the other hand, the country towards which we are going, is enriched in value and loveliness; and we have fresh attraction to draw us upward.

"There our best friends, our kindred dwell."

"LET US ALSO GO, THAT WE MAY DIE WITH HIM."

Thirdly. It implies powerful conviction. This regards the nature of the death he contemplated. Thomas must not have considered Lazarus' death as a mere cessation of being. Had he believed that Lazarus died like the beasts that perish; or, still more, that he died as an unpardoned and unrenewed sinner; even had he died the most admired and dignified character in the world; he would not, he could not have said, "Let us also go, that we may die with him;" rather he would have prayed with David, "Gather not my soul with sinners, nor my life with bloody men." To die with *them* is to be driven away in our wickedness, and to fall into the hand of the living God. Death and damnation are the same to the unconverted. Some of you are nearer hell than you are to the grave: your wretched bodies may be left a few days unburied, but your soul is in a moment with the devil and his angels. But the righteous hath hope in his death. The day of his death is better than the day of his birth.

What is this death which appears so enviable? We call it death because it was so once, but the curse is turned into a blessing; and according to our Saviour it no longer now deserves the name: "If a man keep my sayings, he shall never see death." No, he shall only fall asleep in Jesus: he shall only depart to be with Christ which is far better. What is the death of the believer? It is generally comfortable, even when preceded by many fears. Sometimes it is joyous; and the dying chamber is "none other than the house of God, and the gate of heaven." There, has been brought to pass the saying that is written, "death is swallowed up in victory." There, we have been almost in love with death, and have been ready to exclaim "Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word: for mine eyes have seen thy salvation." This is not indeed always the case. He does not always die in rapture; but he always dies in safety. It is not in the power of death, whatever be his apprehensions and feeling at the moment, to injure one particle of his portion. Yea, to die is gain, inconceivable and everlasting gain. The result, therefore, is always the same. If he wants the light of God's countenance, he who withholds it loves him still; and if the valley of the shadow of death be dark and gloomy, it is not long, and opens into endless day. Then, O blessed exchange, he leaves all his sin, and reaches his God, in whose presence there is fulness of joy, and at whose right hand there are pleasures for evermore.

Some may be ready to envy the death of the scholar His name is announced in the

journals with all his honours. Some masterly pen is immediately engaged to publish his life and his works. The marble perpetuates his name, and his bones are entombed by the side of poets and philosophers. But the soul, where is this? Alas! he was great every where but in the sight of the Lord. He could speak every language but the language of Canaan. He knew every thing but the one thing needful. But see that cottager, on yonder pallet of straw. He is dying fameless and unknown; but he knows Christ Jesus the Lord, and knows that in him he has righteousness and strength. And the excellency of this knowledge raises him above the fear of death, refreshes his fainting spirit, opens a heaven in his heart, and brings angels near. Let me go and die with him!

Some may be tempted to admire and covet the death of the hero. Regardless of the righteousness of the cause in which he is engaged, falling in the field of battle, if he dies a victor, he is shouted. He falls on the bed of honour and in the arms of glory. A public funeral is decreed him. A country follows. His name goes forth into every land. But where is his soul? Who thinks of this? I think of it, and turn away. I turn to the soldier of Jesus Christ, fighting the good fight of faith, and laying hold on eternal life. His exploits, unnoticed and unknown on earth, are gazetted above. By faith I see him more than a conqueror, led in by the captain of his salvation, who confesses him before his Father and the holy angels; and the promise is accomplished, "He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son." Let me go and die with him!

We read of another Lazarus in the Scriptures. He was a beggar and full of sores. And we read of a rich man, at whose gates he was laid to implore relief. They both died. But nothing is said of the burial of Lazarus. But the rich man was "buried" according to his rank. Yet, observe the difference. Lazarus died in the favour of God, and was carried by angels into Abraham's bosom. The rich man died and was buried—but while the undertaker was displaying the emblems of his wealth and grandeur, he was lifting up his eyes in hell, being in torment, and in vain craving a drop of water to cool his tongue! Now, I ask, with which of these two men would you have wished to die? Why even a Balaam, when his eyes were open, said, "Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his."

Fourthly. The sentiment in our text includes a delightful hope. Thomas had a satisfactory persuasion, that death, so far from separating him and his fellow-disciples from Lazarus, would bring them together again, and renew acquaintance and intimacy as before. Such an expectation is not visionary, but well founded; and is necessary to reconcile us to the death of our connexions and to our own. We are formed for society, and much, very much, of our happiness depends on our intercourse with each other. You talk of comfort and pleasure! Think of what the Apostle calls, the comforts of love; think of the pleasures of friendship, and especially of religious friendship. Think of the hours you have passed with those who are gone before you—in the morning and evening walk—in gazing on the beauties of nature—in mental discourse—in pious conversation—in taking sweet counsel together, and going to the house of God in company—in the songs of Zion. "Ointment and perfume rejoice the heart, so doth a man his friends by hearty counsel." And is all this intercourse terminated for ever? No, it is only suspended for a time—suspended till you also die. They cannot indeed come back to you, and would you desire it,

> "and constrain,
> Their unbound spirits into bonds again?"

But you will go to them; and you will mingle with them again; and there will be mutual knowledge: and not only will you know each other, but your communion will be renewed, and not only renewed, but improved. And then your intercourse will be attended with a thousand advantages above all you now enjoy.

Witness the regions you shall meet in *there*. "For the land whither ye go in to possess it, is not as the land of Egypt, from whence ye came out." "It is a better country." "New heavens, and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness."

Witness the exclusion of all afflictions from your condition *there*. Now, you not only rejoice but weep with your connexions. It is unavoidable, if you love them. For they also are born to trouble; and you are embarked with them in the same vessel, and must encounter the same winds and waves. And what so grievous as to see an endeared object in grief? And how much more is endured often by sympathy than the sufferer himself feels? But *there* you will no longer be called to fortify them under reproach; or to sooth under pain. You will no more be required to sustain the aching head, or to administer the irksome draught. The inhabitant shall no more say, "I am sick." No more will your heart be pierced with the words or looks of anguish beyond your relief: "Pity me, pity me, O ye my friends, for the hand of God hath touched me."

Witness the absence of all moral imperfections *there*. Now you try your friends, and they try you by infirmities of temper and carriage. It must needs be, that offences will come, among beings only sanctified in part; and the case is, that if love is to go on, it must cover a multitude of sins; if you

would live in peace, you must forgive one another. But *there*, they will have nothing to bear with in you, and you will have nothing to bear with in them.

Witness the fulness of intelligence possessed *there*. Allowing that there are degrees in glory, yet the least in the kingdom of heaven will know more than any philosopher or divine here ; and with all this knowledge in the works of Nature, and dispensations of Providence, and wonders of Redemption, we shall be prepared for, and enjoy the most sublime communion :—

> "No vain discourse shall fill our *tongue*,
> Nor trifles vex our *ear* ;
> Infinite grace shall be our song,
> And God rejoice to hear."

Witness the superior modes of communication *there*. Now we often mistake each other, and embarrass ourselves by the penury of language. We can only now convey ourselves by words—and how defective are these! They are not definite enough to prevent error, or tender enough to express many a feeling of the heart, or sublime enough to do justice to the conceptions of the mind. The utterance of a big meaning is often diminished, mangled, suppressed, by them. There, no labour and sorrow will attend the birth of our thoughts; our speech will be commensurate with our sentiments ; we shall speak with "the tongue of angels!"

Witness the opportunities of intercourse *there*. Now our seasons for this, are few and impaired, by distance, by sleep, by the avocations and cares of life. By a thousand nameless preventions, how little do we now enjoy of the presence and converse of those we most highly esteem and most dearly love! There, our freedom will be uninvaded, and our conversation uninterrupted. For

Witness, finally, the duration, the perpetuity, the eternity of our fellowship *there*. How short is the letter over whose page you now glow ! How soon ends the delightful conversation you are now sometimes privileged to enjoy ! You expect a friend, and prepare for the enjoyment, but the interview seems a vision rather than a visit:

> "She is come—she is gone—we have met
> And meet, perhaps, never again.

And O the dread of separation ! The anguish of loss when they leave us—in death ! You sorrow, most of all, that you "shall see their face no more!" But you *shall* see them again, and your hearts shall rejoice, and your joy no man shall take from you; and looking at the picture of departed worth, you may recollect with a hope that maketh not ashamed, your "*last* adieu :"

> "But was it such? It was. Where thou art gone,
> Adieus and farewells are a sound unknown.
> May I but meet thee on that peaceful shore!
> The parting sound shall pass my lips no more."

By these reflections, I know I have expressed the feelings of some, and I am persuaded also, of many, with regard to the removal of our excellent friend and brother, of whom it will now be expected that I should take a more particular notice, not to extol the creature, but to glorify God in him.

Services of this kind are, sometimes, very trying—not only by the excitement of feeling, but by the task they impose upon our ingenuity and conscientiousness. For the sake of fond and unreasonable connexions, we are expected to create something out of nothing; or, at least, to magnify and enrich the poor and slender materials we find. For brass, we are to bring gold; and for iron we are to bring silver; and for wood, brass; and for stones, iron. And while we abound in panegyric, we are not at liberty even to hint a fault or a blemish. Sometimes, even in good characters, there is much to censure or bewail; but it must all be concealed or extenuated. So arduous and painful, indeed, are these exercises become, and so much more likely are they to offend than to satisfy, when they are faithfully performed, that some ministers have determined to preach no funeral sermons at all. O that you would so conduct yourselves, as not to pain your ministers while you live, nor plague them when you die !

But I have no embarrassment this morning. In the man before us, there is nothing to find out, nothing to hide, nothing to excuse. He was a child of the light, and of the day. Not that he had already attained, or was already perfect, or had ceased to own himself a sinner at the footstool of divine mercy—

> "For he was frail as thou or I,
> And evil felt within ;
> But when he felt it, heaved a sigh,
> And loathed the thought of *sin*."—

And his life was the harmony of principle and practice; and his creed was imbodied in his conduct; and he was an Israelite indeed, in whom was no guile; and in this he exercised himself, always to have a conscience void of offence toward God and toward man.

I have not been furnished with any precise information concerning the commencement of his religion, nor did I deem it necessary to make any inquiries after it. The reality is the thing to be ascertained. Here we have the evidence of analogy. The changes we observe in nature, are not sudden and sensible disruptions from a preceding state, but the gradual working and melting of one thing into another. The difference between day and night, and summer and winter, is great; yet the transition is imperceptible in its progress, though undeniable in its effects. In the experience of many, there has been nothing in the process of their conversion definitive enough as to time, or place, or manner, or means to form a narrative. Neither

is it important. It is with the proof and the consequences we have to do. It is enough if we are able to say, Whereas I was once insensible to the things of God, I am now alive to them; whereas I was once blind, now I see. That which is born of the Spirit is spirit.

Neither do I lay so much stress as many do on a few dying expressions. Indeed they are never to be much regarded, unless they come from characters that yield us satisfaction without them. When elevated frames and triumphant confidences are not preceded by a way, of which they are a suitable end; when the death, instead of being the natural and scriptural conclusion of the life, is the reverse of all that could have been reasonably inferred from it; we should always speak with caution and fear; for though we are not to limit the Holy One of Israel in the sovereignty of his operations, he has limited us in the rule of our judgment. "Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright; for the end of that man is peace." Where there has been a real and obvious dedication to the service and glory of God, it is encouraging to see how God honours them that honour him; and when persons have said by their practice, "For me to live is Christ," it is delightful to hear them say by their comfort, "For me to die is gain." But physical causes may have great influence here; and I have known some very good men, who have expressed but little confidence and joy in their last moments; and the full assurance of hope is not what I *only* or *principally* look after in a Christian dying; but the penitence which lays a man low at the foot of the Cross; the self-abasement, which under a sense of unworthiness and unprofitableness, cries, "Behold I am vile;" the gratitude which acknowledges under every pain, "He has not dealt with me after my desert;" the resignation that avows, "I know, O Lord, that thy judgments are right, and that Thou in faithfulness hast afflicted me;" the love to the Saviour that feels Him "precious," and speaks "well of his name;" the concern to do good, that leads him, "while life and breath remains," to commend His ways to those he is leaving behind—all connected with humble confidence, and a "looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life." And all this was displayed in various instances by the deceased. I am not provided with any written document, but from the oral communications of his constant attendants, and my own visits to the chamber of sickness and death, I can testify how full he was of self-complaint; how patient in tribulation; how affected with his little improvement of spiritual advantages; how fearful lest the end of his former sickness and recovery should not have been answered; how desirous of obtaining grace to suffer as a Christian, and to glorify God in the fire. Whenever, as I was kneeling by the side of the bed of languishing, I asked him what I should pray for on his behalf, the answer always indicated just such views and feelings as became his condition, and contented a pastor's heart. They who were present, will not easily forget the manner in which, a little before his death, he admonished and encouraged, taking her by the hand, a youthful relative, to remember and seek the Lord.

Many wish to be imposed upon, or at least, to be kept ignorant of their danger; but the deceased had engaged his medical attendant beforehand, to inform him of his real condition. Soon after taking to his room he reminded him of his promise; and when he expressed his apprehension, he received it with firmness, and thanked him for his freedom. Though every thing like ecstasy was unknown, the calmness of hope continued like the softness and mildness of a summer's evening; and he finished his course with peace though not with joy; and had, if not an abundant departure, yet an abundant entrance into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour. His experience reminded me of the language of a good minister, whose death-bed I was attending; "I cannot," said he, "*triumph*, but I can *trust*."

I need not say he was an *amiable* character. The religion of some professors is not only defective but deformed. To imperfections they add disagreeablenesses. Instead of inviting and alluring, they check and repulse. They seem to think that Christian seriousness consists in moroseness; and fidelity in rudeness; and deadness to the world in saying to others, "Stand by thyself, come not near to me, I am holier than thou." But Mr. Hallett was one of those who pursue "whatsoever things are lovely and of good report;" and who not only *maintain* but "*adorn* the doctrine of God our Saviour." His natural disposition was humane and tender, and gentle and obliging; and this being principled and sanctified by divine grace, produced in him that cheerfulness of mind, and gentleness of manners, and readiness of intercourse, and preference of the gratification of others to his own indulgence, that attracted and attached all who knew him. For whatever some ungracious lovers of themselves may think, as if it was religion that procured *them* dislike and disesteem, the words of the apostle will always be found true.—"He that in these things serveth Christ, is accepted of God and approved of men."

No one can question his *beneficence;* for he had it in his power, as well as inclination, to do good and to communicate. His life was a stream of kindness flowing from a generous heart. Who ever applied to him in vain? Who ever was insulted or humbled,

or pained, in receiving relief! His charity was administered with feeling and courteousness. He was a cheerful giver. Freely he had received, and he freely gave.

Some congregations are not remarkable for hospitality to ministers. But our friend was a noble exception. *His* house was always open to receive and accommodate the workmen, who were worthy of their hire. And he found, as Henry says, that the ark is a guest that always pays for its entertainment. It made him more intimately known to many of the servants of God, who benefited him by their conversation, and gave him an interest in their prayers. How many of these had said in their Master's name, when under his roof, "Peace be to this house!" How many of these bore him upon their minds at a throne of grace, in the closet, the family, and the sanctuary, during his sickness and death!

As he was a man of good natural talents, of a sound understanding and a clear judgment, and had an enlarged acquaintance with men and things, he was continually consulted, and he much served his generation by his wise and cool counsel and advice.

But nothing could exceed his *diffidence* and *humility*. He was clothed with it. A copy of a letter has been found, written years ago, to a friend, anxiously laying open the state of his mind; and, wishing his unreserved and faithful opinion concerning his experience, after stating what makes him fear that he is a stranger to the new creation, and what sometimes leads him to hope that he is not. It would well bear reading, if time would allow. The solicitude it betrayed was a token for good: it could only have resulted from the very thing it questioned. This carefulness never diminished. Instead of talking of his conversion as a thing past and certain, like one before him, he prayed, "Lord, create in me a clean heart, and renew a right spirit within me." He required to be urged to come forward and make a profession of religion when he first joined our communion: for while his minister and all his fellow-worshippers had the fullest confidence concerning him, *he* feared that the root of the matter was not in him, and that having only a name to live, he should prove a disgrace to the cause of Christ, and come short at last. For like Fearing in the Pilgrim's Progress, he had no fear beside this. He was not devoid of moral heroism. He would not have hesitated to cut off a right hand or pluck out a right eye. He never shunned the avowal of divine truth, or drew back from following where duty led the way. And if his soul refused to be comforted, it was not because he did not love and desire the blessings contained in the promises; but because he *did* love and desire them supremely; and *therefore* feared that they were too good and great to be designed for one like him. For though it be commonly said that it is easy to believe what we wish, the experience of every man gives the lie to the observation; and the more importance we attach to a thing, and the more our happiness is felt to be wrapped up in it, the more anxious we become; the more liable and alive we are to fear; we want evidence upon evidence, and assurance upon assurance, and can never deem ourselves sufficiently certain. If it be blessed to be "poor in spirit," "to hunger and thirst after righteousness," "to mourn for sin;" if "blessed is the man that feareth always," he was, the Bible being true, an heir of promise; and whatever he suspected, his title was divinely valid.

His *sentiments* were the result of examination and conviction; and he held them with firmness, both with regard to doctrine and dissent. But who ever witnessed the least intolerance or bigotry in him? When did he ever lay an undue stress on any of the circumstantial differences of real Christians? At what moment could he not say, from the heart, "Grace be with *all* them that love our Lord Jesus Christ with sincerity:" "For *whosoever* shall do the will of my Father who is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother."

It has been said, and truly said, that in religion a man is really what he is relatively. By this rule let the departed be tried. What a testimony has he left in the bosom of all those most intimately connected with him, that "in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God he had his conversation in the world, and more abundantly to them-ward." What tender and approving remembrances has he left, —in *those* servants who so long attended upon him,—in *those* workmen that have grown gray in his service,*—in *this* worthy partner of his business, with whom, from the commencement to the close of their connexion, there never was one moment's disagreement,—in *this* large circle of friends, many of whom have come from a distance to weep at his grave,—in *this* mourning, bleeding widow,—in *these* tender and devoted daughters,—in *this* amiable and dutiful son-in-law, —in *these* church members with whom he walked,—in *these* fellow-deacons with whom he officiated,—and in *this* minister on whom his intelligent and mild countenance always beamed affection and respect, who for thirty-four years was never grieved or tried by him; and who, though often employed as the comforter of his friend, was never once called to reprove.

* One of whom said on the morning of his interment, "Forty-two years I have been working for him; when I pleased him he praised me, when I offended him he forgave me, when I was distressed he relieved me, when I was sick he visited me, and I wish this day was over."

This brings me to observe his conduct in connexion with the church. Of this he was not only a very honourable member, but a deacon also. To this office he had been chosen for a number of years by the suffrage of his brethren, keeping their eye upon the recommendations of the apostle. "Likewise also must the deacons be grave, not double-tongued, not given to much wine, not greedy of filthy lucre; holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience. And let these also be first proved; then let them use the office of a deacon, being found blameless. Even so must their wives be grave; not slanderers, sober, faithful in all things. Let the deacons be the husbands of one wife, ruling their children and their own houses well. For they that have used the office of a deacon well, purchase to themselves a good degree, and great boldness in the faith, which is in Christ Jesus."

And here can I avoid remarking what you must all have observed, the *invariable constancy of his attendance on the means of grace?* This is the way to prosper. "The hand of the diligent maketh rich. Blessed is the man that heareth me, says wisdom, watching early at my gates, waiting at the posts of my doors." The religion of those who can wholly or partially forsake the assembling of themselves together, must not only be in a very low, but a very doubtful state. "In all places," says God, "where I record my name, I will come unto thee, and I will bless thee;" but *his* presence and *his* benediction they deem it not worth their while to put themselves to the least inconvenience to enjoy. *He* was as regularly in his pew, as the preacher in his pulpit, considering the duty of pastor and people to be mutual; and knowing that the conduct of an officer in the house of God, is more observed and exemplary than that of a private member. The week-day services were always attended by him as well as the sabbatical; for he delighted in them, and found them necessary to refresh and enliven his mind in the things of God among the vexing and deadening cares of the world. All the visits he paid or received were regulated with a view to his religious opportunities, and never interrupted them. Nor was he like some who are laid up and confined on the Sunday, yet abroad, in any weather, in their own affairs, on the Monday: for the Sabbath is a very healing day with them. How often has he been here, when, like his minister, (forgive me this wrong,) pain and indisposition would have justified absence. No, he *could* not question his attachment to the sanctuary; and therefore he said, with a peculiar emphasis and confidence in him; "I *have* loved the habitation of thy house, and the place where thine honour dwelleth."

I could enlarge; for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. But I have already far exceeded your time, and can only justify the length of the service by a fact we all feel, that such an occasion and such a character do not often come before us.

Well he loved the temple below, and is now in the temple above, never more to go out. He loved the Sabbath, and on the morning of that sacred day, he entered the Sabbath that remains for all the people of God. He loved the praises of Israel, and now he is singing the song of Moses and the Lamb. "LET US ALSO GO, THAT WE MAY DIE WITH HIM."

What shall I say to this bereaved family? I am far from wishing to diminish your loss; but you must, yes, you must be thankful—that he has not been suddenly snatched from you, but after various intimations to prepare you for it, and in a manner the most gradual and gentle—that he has not been prematurely removed, but in a good old age, like a shock of corn fully ripe in his season—that he has not left you in embarrassed or contracted circumstances, but having all things richly to enjoy, and possessing the means of doing good—that you are not sorrowing as those who have no hope, assured that, absent from the body, he is present with the Lord.

YOU, the long and faithful and affectionate wife of his bosom, in whom his heart so perfectly reposed; you, I know from your disposition, as well as years, will be, "a widow indeed, desolate and trusting in God, and continuing in prayer night and day"—and prayer will bring you the relief, the comfort, the grace, every remaining duty and trial will require, during the diminished period of your separation.

MY YOUNG FRIENDS; "a good man," says Solomon, "leaveth an inheritance to his children; an inheritance better than thousands of gold and silver:"—his example, his instructions, the prayers he offered, and which are had in remembrance before God, and the special blessing of divine Providence. For God acts upon the principles of the truest friendship; and as David asked, "Is there any left of the house of Saul, that I may show him kindness for Jonathan's sake," so "the generation of the upright shall be blessed." Indeed, whatever advantages you derive from the deceased, you could not be saved by his religion. He could not exercise repentance towards God, and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ, for you. Godliness is a personal thing—you must be made partakers of the same grace, and be made wise for yourselves. And blessed be God, you have chosen that good part which shall not be taken away from you. He is therefore, if not watching over you now, yet waiting to receive you into everlasting habitations. Be concerned to perpetuate him by spiritual descent. Let there be no contrast ever complained of between

the father and the children. Let not the cause of God, or of the poor, write Icabod on the door; or passengers shake the head and say, "the glory of that house is departed." Catch his mantle. Imbibe his spirit. Maintain the principles and the conduct, the piety, and the benevolence, and the hospitality, which cause the memory of your just father to be blessed.

With Him who has made this breach among us, is the residue of the Spirit. Let us pray that by the conversion of some, and the increased zeal of others, the loss made by this removal may be repaired. And with regard to ourselves, individually, let us resolve not to "be slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises."

To conclude. I ask you all, my dear hearers, with whom do you wish to die? With Lazarus? If so, you must live with him. He died as he lived; and our friend died as he lived. I have little opinion of a death-bed religion. It is a bad time in which to attend to the things which belong to your everlasting peace. True repentance is, indeed, never too late; but late repentance is seldom true; and when it is true, how can it be evidenced either to the individual himself, or to others? It *must*, and it *ought* to remain, doubtful.

Your desire, therefore, is nothing, unless it leads you to wish to live with the people of God, as well as to die with them. But if you love them; if you delight in them as the excellent of the earth; if you make them your examples and companions; if you take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew, saying, "I will go with you, for I have heard that God is with you;" if you run the same race, looking unto Jesus: then at death, "being let go," you shall go "to your own company," and "sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of God." Yea, "you *are* come unto Mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels; to the general assembly, and church of the firstborn which are written in heaven; and to God the Judge of all; and to the spirits of just men made perfect; and to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant; and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel." Amen.

A CHARGE

INTENDED TO HAVE BEEN ADDRESSED

TO THE WIFE OF A MINISTER,

AT THE

ORDINATION OF HER HUSBAND,

BY WILLIAM JAY

"Our conditions are the best preceptors of our duties."—BURKE.

"Give her of the fruit of her hand: and let her own works praise her in the gates."—SOLOMON.

PREFACE.

As there is nothing in creation, that so powerfully engages our attention, attracts our inclinations, refines our manners, exalts our character, and secures our happiness, as the other sex—the sharers of our very nature, and the partners of our lives—we need not wonder that authors have so frequently noticed them. But while physicians, and historians, and philosophers, and poets, have paid these claimants attention—not always in the most deserving and profitable way—it may seem strange that preachers so rarely make them *distinctively* the objects of their address.

Two reasons perhaps may be assigned for this. The one is, that in their ministry, regardless of every subordinate difference, they have principally to do, with those who are before them, in the quality of fallen and recoverable creatures; whose grand concern is to be excited to "win Christ, and be found in Him"—"where there is neither Jew nor Greek, bond nor free, male nor female; for we are all one in Christ Jesus." The other is, the danger of misapprehended motive. Women generally deserve more commendation and praise than men; and commendation and praise are much more likely to improve, than reflection and censure, where the disposition is tender and ingenuous. But in applying these peculiarly to their *female* hearers, complaisance may be supposed to disarm fidelity; and approbation may be construed into compliment. And nothing would be so unworthy a public teacher, as to "have the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with respect to persons." Here, however, the Author has, in more instances than one, trusted his credit in following his conviction. But where is he now?

MY READER:—You need not inquire after—the time—the place—the intended receiver of this address—or the circumstances that prevented the delivery of it. Suffice it to observe, that the title is founded in truth. The case was this. At our ordinations, after the confession of faith, and prayer for the Divine influence and blessing to attend the union that has been publicly recognised between the pastor and the church, it has been always customary to address to each of the parties a CHARGE, containing suitable instructions, cautions, admonitions, and encouragements, with regard to their respective duties. Nothing can be more scriptural or proper than such an usage: and nothing will be found more interesting and edifying, when it is not eked out in dull formality, and prolonged reiterations of sameness; but is performed in the spirit and unction of the service.

But the writer had often thought, that if on these occasions a Charge could be likewise addressed to *another* personage, it would be, if not equally necessary, yet truly important. The WIFE of the preacher is indeed, as his nearest relation, interested in all that is said to *him:* and, as a fellow-member with his people, she is also concerned in all that is spoken to *them.* Yet it is easy to perceive that there is, with regard to HER, an individuality of character, and a peculiarity of condition, requiring and justifying something more than general and indiscriminate address. And the writer has always been persuaded, that one of the failures in ministerial labour has been owing to the neglect of detail and specification, in the enforcement of moral topics. If personal reflection be avoided—and it would be base to indulge in this—practical exemplification cannot be too frequent or too particular. "The words of the wise" could not be as "goads and nails," if they were obtuse. What pierces must be pointed. What affects must be individually appropriate. The self-application people try to elude, must be rendered difficult, impossible. Conscience must be induced to say, "Thou art the man;" and the hearer, "convinced of all, judged of all, and feeling the secrets of his heart made manifest, report that God is in them of a truth." What are curious distinctions, abstruse reasonings, metaphysical subtleties, and general declamations, where, as Bacon says, the preacher should bring home the subject to every man's business and bosom or, like Paul, "warn every man, and teach every man, in all wisdom; that he may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus." "If," says God, "thou take forth the precious from the vile, thou shalt be as my mouth." And how is this to be done? How are we to speak as HE speaks? but by clear delineations of character? just appropriations of promises and threatenings? wise and exciting applications of censure and commendation?

The wife of a minister is in a situation distinguished, observable, and influential. How much depends upon her principles, temper, taste, and behaviour! How various, delicate, and arduous are the duties she has to discharge! How much grace and wisdom are necessary to fill the circle of her vocation, usefully and honourably!—And yet the place she is called to preside in, cannot be distinctly and expressly prepared for, by any course of previous discipline. Though the age abounds with every kind of institution; no seminary, as yet, has been founded for training up female probationers for the Levitical economy; though they are supposed to be, either from the love of distinction, or the desire of usefulness, not a few. The more needful is something like the ensuing endeavour. In making it, the Author has also the sanction of the Apostle's example. *He* deemed it necessary, not only to describe the attributes of approved Deacons and Bishops, but also of their wives—"Even so must their WIVES be grave; not slanderers; sober; faithful in all things."

There is one very important point of light in which the relation, here noticed, is to be viewed. In former times, which we should do well to call to remembrance, the ministry often descended. Many of the ablest servants of God, whose works praise them in the gates, were of hallowed extraction. In the Non-Conformist Memorial, how many do we find besides Philip Henry, of whom it was said, "Instead of the fathers shall be the children." Our own day also furnishes examples to which it would be pleasing to allude, if delicacy did not forbid. And families will increasingly replenish, not only the Church, but the pulpit—as the wives of ministers "are nursing mothers," and are "fellow-helpers to the truth."—If, after all, some may think the following address too restrictive to justify publication; let it be, in fairness, observed, that besides the individuals here specifically regarded, much, in the remarks, will apply to *other* wives; and, that while pursuing a particular object, the course furnished an opportunity to throw out many collateral hints that may be serviceable to other parties—not to say ministers themselves.

The conditions of wives differ considerably with regard to worldly things; and the admonisher could not accommodate himself to every individuality in the gradations. His aim, therefore, has been taken neither from the highest or the lowest rank; but from the middle degree—below affluence, and—above mean dependence. This is perhaps the most eligible estate for the ministers of the Gospel. So thought the Prophet of the Lord, the wise and pious Agar—"Remove from me vanity and lies. Give me neither poverty nor riches. Feed me with food convenient for me: lest I be full, and deny Thee, and say, who is the Lord? or lest I be poor, and steal, and take the name of my God in vain."

Before the writer was diverted from his purpose, it was not his design to have given the Charge at the same time with the other two addresses—as the service already is wearisomely long: but the morning after the ordination; and while the impression of the solemnity would be yet remaining.

Nor would he have delivered it in the public assembly—for where females are concerned, publicity is not to be sought after—but in the pastor's own dwelling.

From the singleness of the service, the speaker could afford to be longer in his admonition than propriety would otherwise have allowed.

From the private nature of the engagement, he felt himself the more free from anxiety and restraint.

From the quality of the individual addressed, the mode of address itself was in some measure influenced. Females love facts and incidents rather than discussions; illustrations, rather than arguments; imagery, rather than abstractness; sententiousness, rather than diffusion: and though they are capable of thinking as well as the other sex, their thinking is more tempered by feeling; and they love thoughts when they are sentiments, rather than notions. Do we mean to censure this taste? It has one incomparable recommendation—it is the manner in which the Scriptures are written; and where God has abounded towards us in all wisdom and prudence.

Imagine then a preacher of some age, observation, and experience—and in the subject before him, of no little happy experience—imagine such a man rising and addressing his interesting auditress—while her husband, and the wives of several neighbouring ministers, are present—in the form and manner following——

Bath; December 1st, 1829

THE CHARGE.

A prudent wife is from the Lord.
Prov. xix. 14.

My esteemed friend and sister:—As this peculiar service did not arise in the preacher from affectation, or a wish to excite notice and remark; so he is persuaded your ready compliance with the proposal of it, has been only the result of a concern how to please the Lord, whose Providence has called you to occupy the station you are now filling. He therefore most willingly engages in it, and hopes that the example, at least as to its spirit, will be hereafter followed. Yet he feels solicitude; and as the effort is novel and probationary, he is not a little concerned for the goodness of the precedent. He fears nothing, indeed, from mere human opinion: he never would enter on any religious engagement unless he was at liberty to obey all the dictates of his conviction. While therefore, on the one hand, he will not seek to give pain or offence; on the other, he is bound to shun every appearance of adulation. How strange that persons should ever dare to pander to the appetite of vanity, in holy exercises, and under the immediate eye of God; instead of being raised into a dignified independence of mind, by feeling the sentiment of Elihu—"I know not to give flattering titles: in so doing, my Maker would take me away."

But as ignorance is not necessary to humility, so neither is it flattery to remind people of their real and relative importance, in order to make them sensible of their responsibilities, and anxious to discharge their obligations.

We rejoice that your sex is elevated to its proper rank in the community. In barbarous ages, and in all savage countries, it never rose to any of the dignities and rights of social, rational, and immortal beings. Some philosophers have strangely argued, whether men have been improved by the progress of civilization, and advancement of the arts and sciences: but no one can deny that women owe much, for a happy change in their condition, to the prevalence of knowledge and polished life. Yet what were the daughters of Greece and Rome, compared with the daughters of Zion? What did even chivalry accomplish for the objects of its enthusiasm, compared with the benefits the female race have derived from the doctrine and spirit of Christianity? It is the religion of Jesus, that, far beyond every human institution, has, for you, softened the manners of the multitude, and subdued the fierceness and tyranny of physical power and dominion. It is this, that has delivered you from the discords and wretchedness of polygamy and divorce. It is this, that, instead of degrading you as the slaves, or seducers of the other sex, leads us to regard you as our companions, our friends, our sisters; the fellow-heirs of the grace of life; the daughters of the Lord Almighty. The light that has been shed upon your true destination and worth, will prevent their ever being concealed or denied in future. It is now too late to controvert the claims which are so justly your due; or refuse to acknowledge that—you must have—that you ought to have—that you are designed to have, a great influence in the relations and interests of society.

Yet the manner in which this influence is to be most properly and advantageously exerted and employed, is not only a question of wisdom, but, as far as the mind of God is made known concerning it, a matter of absolute submission. The ground of moral duty is the same with regard to all; but the exemplification of the principle must vary according to the connexions and circumstances of individuals. And therefore I need not say, that you are expressly forbidden to occupy the office of your husband, and publicly teach in the Church. This prohibition will not surprise or offend any one who reflects, that God has a right to order all affairs in his own house; and that none of his decisions are arbitrary. We judge from very limited views of things; and in no case can we infallibly determine what may be best, eventually, and upon the whole. But his understanding is infinite; and his judgment is always according to truth.

Regulation is not degradation. God himself is the grand example of order. He who is above all, submits to rule. He does—not what he would—but what he ought; or, as his word expresses it, "what becomes him;" what "behoveth him;" what "seemeth good in his sight."

Services uncalled of God, are unacceptable to him: he may pardon them, but he cannot reward them. The result of maintaining the laws of order and decorum, is more important to the welfare of society, than a few instances of usefulness arising from the violation of them; and which are more noticed because they stand out to observation; and are commonly magnified above their real desert, in

consequence of their specious and immediate effect. There is danger too, that when persons have once broken their rank, and have enjoyed the sweetness of notice and applause, they will never subside into entire regularity again. Your husband would have run no little risk, had he, in the election of a wife, made choice of an expositor of the Scriptures, whether in public, or even in the social circle. Some of the same disposition would probably have been left still working the same way: as we too often see in those individuals in our churches who become occasional preachers; they seldom feel again as mere members; and are the most dissatisfied and trying hearers with whom their pastors have to deal.

Limitation is not obstruction. It confines indeed; but it is the confinement of direction, not of hindrance. It does not oppose, but guide. It resembles the banks of a river, which, not keeping the stream back, but only keeping it in, invite and aid along its course; while the current pursues the noiseless tenor of its way—even—and—clear—reflecting the sky,—and refreshing and adorning the earth. How much better is this, than the turbid licentiousness of the flood, though it may make a greater show, and a greater noise; and draw more gazers to its spreading, wild, and dangerous invasions.

The Greeks did not permit the men to have much intercourse with female society, unless they were related; and the Asiatics laid upon their women yet greater restraints. Hence, as Christian churches were first formed in Greece and Asia, it might have been inferred, that such females as wanted other instruction than was given in the public assemblies, must have received it in private, from some of their own sex; and that from them also, women in penury, distress, and confinement, must have received visits of succour and comfort. Accordingly we find females, eligible from their knowledge, experience, discretion, and age were appointed for these purposes. They are often referred to in the Epistles. Paul speaks of those "women that laboured with him in the gospel." In the earlier periods of Ecclesiastical History, we perceive women having some offices analagous to those of the men. But they were of a private nature. Our brethren, the Moravians, retain some functions of this kind; and we believe no man, among them, can be a pastor who is unmarried; as there are services required of the wife, as well as of the husband. But none of them are consonant with the public ministration of the word. How far any appointments of a similar order might be profitably established in our churches, it would not be perhaps improper to inquire.

But we are not going at present to attempt any new schemes. We deem it preferable to take things as they are; and endeavour to improve what is practicable; rather than to deal in what is speculative. We therefore say, that without the assumption of office, and without leaving the sphere of engagement suited to your sex and station; you may, in an eminent degree, serve your own generation by the will of God. Let me freely develope and enforce what I should deem necessary to your securing so desirable an attainment.

I presume on your personal religion. It is said of Zachariah and Elisabeth, that "they were *both* righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless." If a Christian is to "marry only in the Lord," how indispensable is this requisition to a minister. If *he* sets at nought the divine precaution, he not only by his example justifies others in forming unhallowed connexions, but his own wickedness will correct him; and he will be made to feel, in the natural consequences as well as in the penal rebuke, what an evil and bitter thing it is to forsake the fear of the Almighty. His case indeed is to be pitied, should he have been imposed upon after serious and candid examination. And there have been wives who have made pretensions, to gain the upright, who are always the most unsuspecting. And when the mask has been afterwards thrown aside, what an astounding discovery has it been to the deceived, and what a degradation to the deceiver! And when the disguise has continued, what a wretched constraint has been necessary to keep up appearances! And what irksomeness has been endured in being so often engaged in the exercises of unfelt devotion! And what excuses have been made for omitting duties, against the drudgery of which the alienated heart has revolted! And what can be more likely to impair conscience, and to produce impenitence, than "lying against the Holy Ghost?" "And what is the hope of the hypocrite, though she hath gained, when God taketh away her soul?" "But we are persuaded better things of you, and things that accompany salvation, though we thus speak."

Yet, though, in your case, the reality of godliness be indispensable, it is not sufficient. Every thing in the claims of your calling requires—not only that you should fear God, but that you should fear God above many—not only that you should know the truth as it is in Jesus, but be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding—not only that you should be sincere and without offence, until the day of Christ, but be thoroughly furnished unto all good works.

Here let me speak of your deportment—

With regard to THEM THAT ARE WITHOUT.

With regard to OTHER RELIGIOUS PARTIES.

With regard to your OWN CHURCH AND CONGREGATION.

With regard to your FAMILY.

With regard to your HUSBAND.

First, with regard to them that ARE WITHOUT. Of these your husband is to have a "good report, lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil." It must be the same with you: for though less conspicuous than himself, you will not escape observation.

You are required to be firm and decided. You must keep your high and holy ground, and not be drawn down into the course of this world. If you comply with their wishes, and conform to their maxims and manners, they may like you more, but they will esteem you less. It is by your consistency that you are to strike and impress others. They will not regard, what they see you make light of yourselves: and surely you cannot evince the importance you attach to the truths you profess, by owning them at one time, and being ashamed of them at another, according to the place and company in which you are found: but only by the constancy of your adherence to them, and the sacrifices you are ready to make in their defence.

Yet tenderness must be connected with decision, both to qualify it, and to prove the source from which it results—that it is not the offspring of obstinacy, but principle; that it is not self-will, but a regard to the will of God; that it is not prejudice, but enlightened conviction. Whoever in this cause contends earnestly, must yet strive lawfully. A Polemic of your sex is rarely desirable. A theological Joan of Arc we would rather decline altogether. The Amazons of orthodoxy, as those of old, may amputate the breast, the better to draw the bow: but we prefer their feeling to their fierceness; and their charms to their courage. They are not only most lovely, but most efficient, when unarmed, and attired in the meekness and gentleness of Jesus Christ.

In your social intercourse, be careful to unite discretion with integrity. Be concerned not only to maintain your reputation, but the honour of your religion. Do not imagine that truth is an altar that sanctifies every offering. Plead for no doctrine in an uncharitable temper. Christian faithfulness does not require ill-nature; and gains nothing by ill-breeding. It is a poor way of usefulness, to lose all future opportunities of doing good to your fellow-creatures, by driving them away from your presence, or hardening their minds against you. Yet how often is this done by the haughtiness of reproof! or the violence of controversy! or the rancour of party zeal!

Treat no one with rudeness or neglect. Shun the spirit of the Pharisee, trusting in nimself that he is righteous, and despising others—"Stand by thyself; come not near to me; I am holier than thou." Mixing with company prevents the appearance and suspicion of unamiableness; and has the effect of promoting good neighbourhood, and general good will. Remember that what gentility would require of you as an accomplishment, Christianity enjoins upon you as a virtue; and what a woman of good breeding receives from education, you are to derive from religion; and what is only in the people of the world the hollowness of ceremony, is to be in you the reality of principle. "Politeness," says lord Chatham, "is benevolence in little things." It consists in general attention; in doing civil offices, and using kind words to all; in keeping every offensive subject out of view; in never obtruding your own partialities; but always minutely regarding the wishes of others; in accommodating yourselves as much as you innocently can, to their habits and tastes; in forgetting yourselves, and obliging every one about you. And what says the Scripture? "Let every one of us please his neighbour for his good to edification." This is the way to adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour; and to render the gospel not only impressive, but attractive. This is the way to walk in wisdom towards them that are without, so as to remove their prejudices, and bring them over to your cause—and "he that winneth souls, is wise."

Be kind and merciful, as well as obliging. Always regard the afflicted. The hour of trouble is a season of moral impressiveness: the heart is then more serious and more soft. While the daughters of vanity and dissipation turn away from the abodes of penury and wo; be you a little image of him who is a very present help in trouble. When Mr. Howard presented his wife with a purse of one hundred guineas to enable her to take a summer's excursion: "what a pretty cottage," said she, "will this build for a poor family!" How much more pure, and satisfying, and durable, was the pleasure the sight of this little temple of charity afforded her, than what she could have derived from a visit to a watering-place! It was a common saying of the Lord Jesus, who, from experience, knew the deliciousness infinitely better than any other being: "It is more blessed to give than to receive." It is to be lamented, that many in your station have it so little in their power to gratify their benevolence: but whatever resources your husband commands, he will readily allow you a share of the pleasure and honour arising from the application of them: and the beneficence which should distinguish a minister's wife, is not confined to alms-givings. There are alms-deeds. There are numberless ways in which a feeling heart can reach distress. When it cannot succour, it can soothe.

It is important to be able to give advice to the poor. They are often thriftless and wasteful, from ignorance, as much as from

negligence. But they may be taught to make a little go a great way; and actual and personal instruction may do much more than printed tracts.

Some little knowledge also of medicine would be always an instrument of usefulness in female charity; and none could more advantageously use it than a pastor's wife.

Your sex are sometimes called angels. The design has not always been laudable: and the flattery, it is to be feared, has sometimes turned them into fallen angels. But you may truly deserve the praise of the title. Our Saviour, speaking of children, says, "Despise not one of these little ones, for their angels do always behold the face of my Father who is in heaven." And, says Paul, "Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister unto them that are the heirs of salvation?" Make these beautiful and lovely creatures your models. A female is never so angelical as when she adds to her personal graces the moral attractions; and displays the tender heart; the melting eye; the soft hand binding up the wounded spirit; and the foot with eager steps at the door of misery, visiting the fatherless and the widows in their affliction.

Secondly; with regard to OTHER RELIGIOUS PARTIES. You must not judge of persons by their walking with *you*, in the outward fellowship of the gospel. They may assemble in other places, and belong to other denominations, in which the worship of the Spirit is equally maintained, and the word of life is equally preached; and be members of the one true Church of the living God. And being such, you are not at liberty to show an indifference to them. You *must* be able to say, "Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity:" "Whosoever shall do the will of my Father who is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother."

As your husband professes to maintain the character of a worker together with all those who hold the same essential truth, though they differ from him in matters of inferior moment; you should aim and endeavour to cherish in him the spirit of love and concord. Guard against prejudice and envy. Be not offended or grieved at hearing the commendations and successes of other ministers, as if they eclipsed the excellencies, or detracted from the usefulness of one for whom it is natural that you should feel peculiarly concerned. He that soweth, and he that reapeth, may rejoice together. He that planteth, and he that watereth, are not enemies or rivals. The various officers in an army, and the various builders in the house, require and aid each other.

When the Wesleyan Methodists opened a Chapel at Painswick, near his own meeting, the late excellent Cornelius Winter prayed three times publicly the preceding Sabbath for their encouragement and success. When Mr. Hoskins, of Bristol, the Independent Minister of Castle-Green, opened a Meeting in Temple Street; what did the incomparable Easterbrooke, the vicar of the parish? The morning it was opened, he was almost the first that entered it. He seated himself near the pulpit. When the service was over, he met the preacher at the foot of the stairs, and shaking him with both hands, said aloud; "I thank you cordially, my dear brother, for coming to my help—here is room enough for us both; and work enough for us both; and much more than we can both accomplish: and I hope the Lord will bless our co-operation in this good course."

There is too little of this in many neighbourhoods; so that if the leaders of the several interests are not in a state of hostility, they are estranged, and shy of each other. And there is often, we fear, a secret influence exerted *very near the throne;* and arising, not from a bad heart, but quick and feverish feeling; that contributes to produce and perpetuate the effect.

A man cannot receive a higher commission than the ministry of the word; and such we are commanded to esteem very highly in love for their work's sake. Their acceptance is necessary to their usefulness; and their reputation is necessary to their acceptance. Beware, therefore, of speaking freely or lightly of the character and claims of any of God's servants. Remember how Miriam erred in her flippancy, when, jealous of the popularity of Moses, she endeavoured to lower him comparatively in the estimation of the people. God was displeased. The cloud removed from the tabernacle. And "she became a leper as white as snow." And was "ashamed" to be seen abroad "for seven days." Crimes are not immediately and visibly judged now, as they were under a former dispensation. And it is well they are not. If Miriam's infirmity was followed by Miriam's correction, we know some handsome faces, and some not very handsome, whose cadaverous complexion would soon require seclusion and concealment; while the mortified sufferers would be grateful for the prayers of those they have laboured to supplant or depreciate, to restore them to comeliness and sight. "Wherefore then were ye not afraid to speak against my servant Moses?"

Thirdly; with regard to your own CHURCH AND CONGREGATION. Here, like your husband, you are to be "an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity."

Never let your behaviour be so reserved, as to appear haughty and disdainful towards any of the members or attendants; especially any of those in humbler life. A little partiality here, will be sure to awaken the re-

mark; "The rich have many friends." Your leaning should rather be to the other side; not only because it will do more honour to your motive, and you will be complying with the injunction, "condescend to men of low estate;" but also because so many of the subjects of divine grace are found among the poor of this world; no few of whom are rich in faith; and able, from their own experience, to reward your intercourse with them.

Never be drawn into excessive attachments. They gender envy and provoke reflection. Like himself, a minister's wife is hardly allowed friendship; at least, great and engrossing intimacies. She stands in the same relation to many; and must be respectful and attentive to all. If she cannot hinder the existence of particular feelings and preferences; she may, she must learn to rule the expression of them. Many in your rank, especially the narrow-minded and the ill-educated, always have their cronies—a kind of low favourites—decent dependents—the collectors of all the news of the church, congregation, and neighbourhood—and who can feed their entertainers with timely selections, according to their peculiar appetite and wishes, with which they are perfectly acquainted. Flee these. Beware of all newsmongers. Frown them to a distance. Chill them into silence. What says the proverb? "The receiver is as bad as the thief." What says the witty and sarcastical South? "The tale-bearer, and the tale-hearer, should be both punished together; only the one should be hung up by the tongue, and the other by the ear."

After all your caution, there are things which you will unavoidably hear—but you must hear them, as if you heard them not—and you need not relate them. Be not suspicious, yet never be too open. Never put yourself, by imprudent confidence, in the power of any. Never betray secrets the divulging of which may involve you in embarrassment or disgrace.

Keep yourself aloof from all breaches in the families of your people, and any differences that may arise in the church or congregation. There is danger here, from your being, with regard to such things, in the way of much prattling information; and unless you are guarded, you will be easily drawn in, and become a partizan: and when a female has taken her side—which seldom requires much time; she is apt to be more open than false; and frequently feels and expresses more than principle, or at least prudence, can justify. Never show or wish to be "a judge and a divider." Never be found in the Ecclesiastical Court. Leave these matters to those to whom they properly belong, and who "have the rule." I never knew a minister's wife, but was esteemed and admired in proportion as she shunned contention and intermeddling, and kept within the duties of her own appropriate and lovely sphere. It is better to withdraw, and retire, and weep, and pray, than to excite notice, and gain partial praise, with the froward, and even the forward in spirit. "Who is a wise" woman, "and endued with knowledge?" Let her "show out of a good conversation" her "works with meekness of wisdom. For where envy and strife is, there is confusion, and every evil work. But the wisdom that is from above, is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, easy to be entreated; full of mercy and good fruits; without partiality, and without hypocrisy. And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace, of them that make peace."

In the visits you pay and receive, be always ready to encourage religious discourse. Let this appear to be the element the most congenial with your spirit. Let your speech turn habitually on subjects, rather than persons. Especially, speak evil of no man—"Upon her tongue was the law of kindness." In a general way, be rather reserved than over communicative. We have many good discourses, says archbishop Tillotson, on the excellency of speech; we want one now on the excellency of silence. "In the multitude of words there wanteth not sin." How often does Solomon, the wisest of mortals, enforce a *comparative* backwardness to speak. In one place he tells us it is safe—in another, it is wise—in a third, it is dignified—in a fourth, it is useful—and every where he extols it as a virtue. Nature, my sister, teaches us this lesson as well as Scripture. It has given us two ears, but one tongue: the former avenues are always left open; the latter organ is easily enclosed—as much as to say, "Be swift to hear; but slow to speak." Here, alas! "who can understand his errors?" Who can read the testimony of Jesus—"Every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment"—and not pray, "Set a watch, O Lord, before my mouth: keep the door of my lips!" If *your* connexions and intercourse afford you more opportunities and excitements to speak—so much the more necessary is it that "your speech should be always with grace, seasoned with salt." I urge this, because of its peculiar and neglected importance. Surely, what James says of our sex will apply equally to yours—especially to a female in your relation. "If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man; and able also to bridle the whole body."

Fourthly; with regard to YOUR FAMILY. By this I here mean servants and children.

Upon the former I shall not much enlarge. Surely, in the treatment of your servants, it will not be necessary to remind you, that you have a Master in heaven, and that there is no respect of persons with God. He that

made you in the womb, made them. No being is despicable as a creature of the Most High, so fearfully and wonderfully made: and no one is to be contemned on the ground of power and influence. Domestics can injure you: their very situation gives them peculiar means and opportunities; and they may employ their advantage in ways of which you have no apprehension, and which render counteraction difficult or impossible. It is never desirable to wage war with inferiors: you must descend to the same lowness of contention, and employ weapons, in the use of which, they are likely to be much more expert than yourself—while the sympathy of beholders will be most naturally drawn to the weaker side. Think not a hint of this kind beneath your notice. It will procure you more discredit than you are aware of, to be always, or often, changing your servants; or to wear the character of a harsh, scolding, close, stingy mistress.

Sink not your proper distinction, by suffering your affability to degenerate into familiarities. Neither let your kindness disappear in your authority. Servitude being established against the natural equality of mankind, should be softened as much as the duties of it will allow. Consider your servants as humble friends. Little minds endeavour to support their consequence by distance and hauteur: but true dignity is always condescending and tender: and in a woman, we admire, not what is stately, but what is endearing; not what is dazzling, but what is mild and lovely; not what is great, but what is graceful. Forbear threatening. Distinguish between mistakes, and the want of principle. Pass by little infirmities. Is it reasonable that the mistress should exact from a servant, the perfection, the servant can never expect from the mistress? Afford your domestics occasional indulgence; and especially moments for reasonable visits to their relations and friends. Let the readiness to commend you to others,—the tear when you leave home,—the beaming countenance when you return,—the eager and uncomplaining attendance and watching by day and night in your sickness; show that you have gained the heart, as well as hired the hand; and are served, not by the sullenness of fear, but the cheerfulness of affection. Above all, you will not overlook the moral and spiritual welfare of those who are not only under your *command*, but under your *care*—and you will care for their *souls*. You will not only give them opportunity to attend the means of grace, and family worship; but you will personally instruct, reprove, encourage them. However ignorant they may come into your service, it will be a disgrace to the mistress for them to depart unable to read the Scriptures.

With regard to the children the Lord may graciously give you, your husband of course will share with you in the discharge of parental duty. But though, here, you are not exclusively, yet you are—really—you are deeply, and in some respects—peculiarly concerned. In all the animal creation, the *maternal* instincts are the most powerful; and the wisdom of the provision is obvious—the rearing of their offspring almost entirely belongs to the mother. In the education of children—of the daughters till they are married; and of the sons till a certain age—the care falls chiefly on the female. To her belong unquestionably the *first* years of both; and those periods are the most tender and ductile. Her share of tuition, therefore, begins very early; and it cannot begin too early. Infants are impressed before they are supposed to be receptive of impression; and they are proceeding in a direction before we think they are capable of motion. They can remember before they can reason; and they can judge before they can speak; as you see by their looks and gestures, their attractions and their aversions. Here your wisdom and your vigilance must be awake, instantly to seize and improve opportunities, apparently insignificant, but most serious in their effects. The roads that lead to places very remote from each other, diverge very slenderly at their beginnings. When I wish the branch of a tree in my garden to occupy a particular space, I can guide it, while a sucker, with a thread: a few years after it will require a rope; and the attempt to bend it will be likely to break.

As a mother too, from his endeared dependence upon you, you are sure of the child's first and liveliest attachment. And you have always the advantage of immediate access. And you have also the influence of that insinuation and address which our sex has not the faculty to possess, or the patience to employ. One of the absurd opinions of former times was, that poison never diffused itself so quickly and powerfully as when it was administered in human milk—nothing certainly affects so much as what is imbibed with the mother's milk. In the age of Silver, Hesiod says, poetically, children continued, during an infancy of one hundred years, under maternal care.

I am weary, said the ambitious Cornelia, of being called Scipio's daughter. Do something, my sons, to style me the mother of the Gracchi. What an honour will be conferred on you, if you should be the means of rearing a disciple of Jesus! an heir of God! a minister of the Gospel! an ambassador to the heathen! And why should you be discouraged? We know that human nature is depraved; but we know the grace that is in Christ Jesus. We do not think of your success without his blessing; but we encourage you to seek it: and while, in dependence

upon it, you employ all the means in your power, remember his own word: "Train up a child in the way that he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it." This is indeed a proverb, and therefore admits of exceptions: but, as a proverb, it must be generally true: and where the mother has performed her part, there are few failures—at least *eventual* failures. For a time she may have seemed to labour in vain; but she sowed the seed in good season; and though impatience deemed it dead, some after-showers and sun-shines caused it to spring up, and bring forth fruit. So it was with the mother of Augustine. You have also heard, to the same effect, the grateful acknowledgments of a Newton and a Cecil in later times. While many, by maternal influence, have been reclaimed from the paths of the Destroyer; others—and who can tell their number—others have been preserved; and have feared the Lord from their youth and their infancy. This was the case with Samuel and Timothy; the Jewish Church being indebted for the former to Hannah, and the Christian Church to Lois and Eunice for the latter. David does not any where refer to Jesse; but, says he, "Save the son of thine handmaid."—"I am the son of thine handmaid." And who can tell what early and touching recollections of *her* early, and tender, and pious solicitude, he felt at the moment of such appeals?

At our ordinations, when the candidate has been asked a reason of the hope that he has been called by Divine Grace, how often, if he has adverted to the means, has a tear—which instantly drew forth kindred drops from the eyes of others—almost interrupted the confession, "I had the advantage of a pious mother"——

—You cannot have forgotten the acknowledgment, on the preceding day, of one so dear to you—"I have no miracle to publish: I have no surprising or sudden change to relate—But blessed be his Name; I was brought up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord—the taking of my little hand in her's—I think I feel it still, and leading me aside to pray—Her concern on returning from the house of God, to enable me to remember and understand the sermon—The murmur of her dear voice at her devotion as I passed her chamber door—The maxims and principles she lodged in my infant mind—The tears that bedewed her reproofs—The caresses that enforced her entreaties—Her cheerfulness, that constantly said, 'O taste and see that the Lord is good,'—Her example, that imbodied her religion, and made it as lovely as herself—These endear the memory of a mother, from whom, under God, I have derived my spiritual, as well as my natural life"——

You are not commonly in danger of injuring or overlooking the health of your offspring intentionally: but wisdom is profitable to direct. A little medical advice, and observation and experience, in the service of common sense, will enable you to see the importance of air and exercise—of sweetening the blood by a proper choice of food—and of preventing ailments by simplicity of diet, and keeping nature unclogged by excess. Never accustom them at table to choose for themselves—you are the best judge as to the quality and measure of their provisions—and they cannot be too early taught to give up self-will to superior wisdom.

Were I addressing your partner, I should say, "Fathers, provoke not your children to anger, lest they be discouraged." But *your* danger generally lies on the other side. Therefore beware of fond and foolish indulgence. Trifles may be passed over; and some minor offences be safely buried in the bosom of maternal tenderness: but conceal no faults your children may commit, of a more serious nature, from the father; nor, if you *privately* plead for the softening of correction, ever counteract the effort of rebuke, by appearing to oppose it at the time. In all matters of moral rule and discipline, nothing is more necessary than for the parents to be seen agreed and decided.

Endeavour to cultivate the manners of your children: and render them examples of good behaviour. If they are forward, and impertinent, and rude, and disorderly, insulting to inferiors, disrespectful to superiors, disobedient to parents; the minister as well as the mother will be blamed: for he is to be "one that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity. For if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the Church of God?

Be not regardless of their dress. Let it not be costly and fine. If, through the inconsideration of friendship, things are given them, above the propriety of their condition, let them be refused, or exchanged, or altered. Instead of cherishing, even indirectly, a fondness for attire, endeavour to subdue, or rather prevent it. This, however, requires much skilfulness, especially with daughters; and all precepts will be more than vain, unless they are enforced by your own example.

Keep them from visiting too much. Some, from a regard to their father's character and office, may not only invite your children, but contribute to spoil them, by making too much of them; and giving them ideas and feelings above their rank. On this principle, they should rarely, if ever visit families of superior condition, lest they should grow dissatisfied with the plainness and sobrieties of home.

And push them not too soon and too much into observation. Especially when your children are *present*, never in company notice and extol any particular quality or attain-

ment; with regard to which, you will thereby assuredly render them false and vain; and stimulate them to forwardness and talking, against which you cannot guard them too much. Hearing *you* thus admire them, they think every one else does the same. In your attentions to them, therefore, before others, let them not perceive any particular solicitude on your part to set them off by their talents. Be content to form their minds by slow degrees; and remember, that if it were in your power to advance them in knowledge beyond their years, it would not be desirable: for what is the advantage of premature ability, compared with the danger of pride, arrogance, and self-sufficiency?

No, nor in their *absence* be even eager to bring forth their parts and sayings. Not only does modesty require this, but a regard to the feelings of others: you have no right to embarrass your company, by obliging them to commend and admire things which *they* may not deem so wonderful and clever as the mother. What a child had Mary! How many prodigies could she have brought forward! "But Mary kept all these things, and pondered them in her heart." I am aware that this maternal propensity is not peculiar to the wives of ministers; but they are more in danger of it than many others; and the weakness will be more observable in them.

Devote a portion of your time expressly every day to the improvement of your infant charge. Prudence must determine when, and how long it should be; but after deciding, be persevering and firm in adhering to your plan; and let interrupters no more break in upon it, than upon the time sacred to the studies of your husband.

Especially employ, without making it irksome and tiresome, a portion of the Sabbath to the examination and instruction of your children. Yet we have known the wives of some ministers, who have been fonder of attending Sunday-schools, and *addressing* them, than of being "teachers of babes" at home. Sunday-schools must have their attendance, and much praise is due to those who dedicate to their service so many of their hours: but if persons have originated families, *these* must be *their* first care—"He that provideth not for his own, especially those of his own house, hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel."

Fifthly; with regard to YOUR HUSBAND. He is your chosen and dearest relation; and in this connexion another is involved. *Your* husband is also your pastor; and thus an additional reason is furnished why you should "reverence" him, and "submit" to him. It is little honourable to any party, when, not only the head of the family, but the ruler of the synagogue, is supposed to be under government. In whose hand soever the sceptre be found, it is the sign of dominion; and however softly it may be swayed, they who are under it are the subjects. But, indeed, women who assume the reins, seldom manage them with moderation, or dignity. All usurpers, whatever was their previous disposition, incline to tyranny and display; and, unlike those who naturally and legitimately govern, are never satisfied but as their power is felt and acknowledged.

In no case does it become the wife to exercise *authority* over the man she has promised to obey: and she is a vain and a weak woman, who exposes to observation even the *influence* which in many cases she is justified in using. Whom does the poet commend?

> She who ne'er answers till her husband cools,
> Or, if she rules him, never shows she rules;
> Charms by accepting, by submission sways,
> Yet has her humour most when she obeys.

When Livia had attained such an ascendancy over her husband Augustus that there was hardly any thing he would refuse her, though emperor of the world, many of the married ladies of Rome were anxious to know the secret and the source of her success: to whom she replied, "I rule by obeying." We need not inquire from what cause it arises, but a man soon acquires a notion of the superiority of his own sex. This

> "Grows with his growth, and strengthens with his strength—"

He is tenacious to maintain it; and therefore is jealous of every attempt to reduce it. But it has been observed, that he possesses at the same time a sentimental tenderness towards the other sex; and an inclination to please and indulge them; and thus, while he would domineer, he is subdued. This has been called his weak side. Be it so; the use of it is obvious; and a woman of sense can always turn it to advantage, and found on it a better dominion than authority—an empire of address and affection—caresses her orders—tears her menaces—and silence and submission her arms. Here she can do wonders, because she appeals to nature itself; and is supported by a principle implanted in us by the wise Creator to humble the pride of power, and to compensate those who have not the force to conquer, by giving them the fascination to charm.

Never forget, therefore, that your means of sway must have for their basis, gentleness, sweetness, and good temper; and that they must be so exercised, as to allow your husband to believe that he is supporting his sovereignity, even while he is yielding it. The *show* even of *influence* will alarm his vanity and consequence; but the discovery of your intention to succeed, by any thing like authority, harshness, or sullenness, will not only produce disappointment, but gender resistance or disgust. No man of feeling was ever proof against the kindness of a sensible

woman: but where, in all history, can an instance be produced, in which an ascendancy over him has been obtained by frowardness? scolding? and strife for pre-eminence?

Observe, however, that what we have said of influence, goes not to justify that low and artful cunning, by which some endeavour to carry a favourite purpose. If we can depend upon the writers of a former age, the grand resource of a lady, whose lord denied her any thing on which she had set her heart, was to fall into an hysteric. The ministry of fits and vapours seems now to be nearly closed. But, says an excellent writer, "Let not the dispositions, by which it was introduced and upheld, be found to survive its fall. Let it ever be remembered that she, who by teazing, by wheedling, by finesse, under any shape whatever, seeks to deceive or to weary into acquiescence or consent; acts no less plainly in opposition to her duty of scriptural obedience, than she would have done, had she driven him into compliance by the menaces and weapons of an Amazon."

This general, but very important requisite in your conduct towards your husband being settled; you will allow me to mention a few other articles deserving your candid regard.

—Such is an attention to his *personal appearance*. He will detest being a fop; and you will not allow him to be a sloven. You will not wish to see him waving the ring on his lily hand, nor indulging

> "A silly fond conceit of his fair form
> And just proportion, fashionable mien
> And pretty face, in presence of his God."—

even comparative

> "—Slovenly neglect, and rustic coarseness,"

are better than affectation and finicality. But these are not good in themselves. Purity, neatness, decency, become the man of God in his appearance and apparel; and his want of it will draw reflection upon you.

—Such is an attention to his *property*.

These must be the matters in which the Apostle says, the wife is to "guide the house." Paul would not have a minister entangled with the affairs of this life; that he may know how to please Him that has called him to be a soldier. Keep your husband as much as possible disengaged from secular things, that he may feel himself free for his work, both in the preparation and the discharge. The kind of keenness and cleverness in worldly business, often admired in others, would have a lowering effect in a minister. The pantry, the shop, the marketplace, the slang and the tricks of the huckster, would be incongruous and desecrating in him. His tact is to be of another order, and to evince itself in the things of God. "Is it reason that we should leave the word of God and serve tables?" Therefore Deacons were appointed even to provide for the bodily relief of the poor of the Church; while "we," says the Apostle, "give ourselves to prayer and the ministry of the word."

In vain the husband labours and gains, if you, in your ill-housewifery, are wilfully expensive; or negligently profuse; or ignorantly wasteful. "Every wise woman buildeth her house; but the foolish plucketh it down with her hands." Let nothing deprive *you* of the commendation: "She looketh well to the ways of her household, and eateth not the bread of idleness." What is the cleverness of a female showing away out of her sphere of duty? what is a sprightly wit? a smartness in conversation? an epistolary talent? or a smattering of the languages? Will these raise and recommend a woman in the midst of a neglected, ill-managed, disordered, sinking family?

Despise not a little knowledge of arithmetic—some accomplishments may be much less useful. Shun arrears. Be regular in demanding, and punctual in discharging your weekly accounts. If you commanded abundance, the Scripture would say to you, "Gather up the fragments, that nothing be lost"—and there are many purposes to which the fruit of frugality may be applied; but how absolutely indispensable must inspection and strictness be, where the resources to be managed are limited!

It is not necessary that your husband should appear as a gentleman, and awaken feelings of rivalship in civil things among his people, or neighbours. Never remind him of the superior circumstances of others, or urge him even indirectly to live beyond his means—and judge of these—not by his occasional, but expected income. Exercise every kind of self-denial, rather than see him involved. How trying to his feelings to be reduced to the difficulty of borrowing! How reproachful, while calling upon others to provide things honest, not only in the sight of the Lord, but also in the sight of men, to incur the suspicion of being unrighteous himself! How can he preach at all, with pleasure or freedom, though others may as yet be ignorant, while he is conscious of legal claims ready to be visited upon him.

And here you are to display your economy. You are not to regard this as a low mean thing, fit only for the vulgar. Solomon characterizes his virtuous woman, though in high life, principally by simplicity, diligence, regularity, and domestic management: and in these the ancient Greeks and Romans placed much of female worth and excellence.

But what is economy? It is not "the stopping of one hole in the sieve." It is not a particular retrenchment, or an occasional saving. It is not the pinching of the servants, and stinting the family one week, to give a showy dinner the next. It is a mode of regulation that eyes the whole detail of household ex-

pense. It is the art, not of sordid saving, but of making a little go a great way. It eludes meanness, as well as waste. Stinginess is one extreme, profuseness is another. There is a steering between them: but this is not easy; and it requires the judgment and skill which some females seem to exercise by a kind of intuition or instinct: so that they always appear to advantage; unembarrassed; unconfused; ready without haste; deciding as if without design; and while causing every thing to move in its proper time and place, keeping the mechanism of the process invisible—for the perfection of art is to conceal art.

—An attention to his *health of body*. This in his case is peculiarly important. It is not only the source of his comfort and enjoyment; but it is essential to his usefulness. What confusion and disappointment result from the sickness or indisposition of one on whose ministrations such numbers depend—for "his lips feed many." Paul does not think it beneath him to watch over the health of Timothy; and to prescribe for him like a physician: "Drink no longer water, but use a little wine for thy stomach's sake, and thine often infirmities."

Study therefore your husband's constitutional liableness to injury—not to render him soft, and effeminate, and fanciful; but cautious; and to aid him in the regulation of his mode of living, as to sleep, and diet, and exercise. You need not be afraid of *proper* application and exertion. These, instead of injuring the health, conduce to it. They give circulation to the fluids, and prevent the evils of stagnation: they hinder the rust of the mind, and keep the powers polished, and easy of motion. But there may be an overdoing. The machine may be overworked. *You* will be, perhaps, by your constant and intimate observation, the best judge of the degree of labour to which he is equal. *You* will not be ignorant of his impaired digestion, his perturbed rest, his trembling nerves, his depressed spirits, his exhausted frame, and the low ebb of vigour when the Sabbath is gone, and the Monday sees him not living, but existing only. And you must not neglect to sound the timely alarm. And if zeal, without knowledge or feeling, still urges the same unremitting efforts; and tells him he cannot die in a better cause: if his spiritual taskmasters require the same tale of bricks: if the *three* services of the day must still be exacted from wasting strength yet growing anxiety—his blood will be upon the heads of his godly murderers; but you have delivered your soul.

—An attention to his *peace of mind*. We have met with some members of churches, who kindly think that affliction and depression are *best* for a minister. We are almost ashamed to use a coarse and unfeeling proverb among them, quite worthy, however, of the employers—and since we are not in the pulpit—let it come out—"That the preacher never preaches so well as when the cow has trod upon his foot." Yet it never seems to strike these cold calculating reasoners, that *they*, as hearers, may be benefited *themselves* by a similar experience. But if domestic distress be desirable for the improvement of the preacher, so may any other kind of rueful probation: and if the physician, in order to perfect him in his art, is to go through all the complaints for which he prescribes, he will have neither time nor ability to practise. To dismiss this delicate figure, I hope my brother's "fair heifer" will not achieve this species of service for *him*. I am sure she will not. I am sure she will encourage him.

And he will require every favourable excitement. His work is arduous. He has trials in common with men; and he has trials in common with his fellow-Christians: but he has also various trials peculiar to himself—and *you* will best know this. *You*, indeed even you, will not know *all* his heart's bitterness: but you will hear enough, see enough, to convince you that he, whose office it is to comfort others, needs no little consolation himself. And your smiles can rainbow the cloud of grief. Your soft hand can smooth the wrinkles of his oppressed brow. Your gentle words, like the fanning of an angel's wing, can cool the heatful anguish of the mind. Your kind management—a woman is never at a loss where comfort is called for—can withdraw a distracting train of thought and substitute cheerful imagery. You can remind him of instances of usefulness, when he is complaining, "I have laboured in vain, and spent my strength for nought." In his doubts and fears, with regard to his own spiritual condition—and to such he is liable—you can be the wife of Manoah, who said, "If the Lord were pleased to kill us, he would not have received an offering at our hand; nor have shown us such things as these." If among his people he meets with mortifying defections in such as should prove a comfort to him, he will find one tried and faithful bosom in which he can safely repose. If he has storms abroad, peace will be always awaiting him at home: and he will always enjoy a resource in that unfailing good temper

> "————Whose unclouded ray
> Can make to-morrow cheerful as to-day."

You will, indeed, be every way anxious to render his own abode, not only the tabernacle of the righteous, but the dwelling-place of tenderness and comfort. In this, his safety as well as his satisfaction will be much concerned. We have known not only men, but ministers, who have fallen by temptation: and though we by no means wish to justify

or extenuate their conduct, it is no secret, that in some instances, at least, there has been little domestic happiness and attraction. What attraction *can* there be in sullenness? or in peevishness? or in clamour? "Better is a dry morsel and quietness therewith, than a house full of sacrifices with strife." "It is better to dwell in a corner of the house-top, than with a brawling woman in a wide house." "A continual dropping in a rainy day, and a contentious woman, are alike. Whoso hideth her, hideth the wind, and the ointment of his right hand that bewrayeth itself." What attraction *can* there be in negligence? disorder? slatternliness? A disregard of propriety, and especially neatness of apparel, is in a female a fault that nothing can expiate. Even religion will not excuse it. There is a greater connexion between mental and outward purity than some are aware of. A female may be always judged of by her dress. The founders of Methodism were accustomed to say, that cleanliness was next to godliness. I have known a few exceptions to this, in men. I never knew one in a woman.

Rely not too much on the rights of relationship, however intimate the connexion may be, and however endeared it ought to be. In preserving and keeping alive attachment, you must not absolutely depend upon the impressions that awakened it. A woman is not to presume on the certainty of homage, regardless of an attention to her manners. She is not, as soon as she has stepped over the threshold of marriage, to drop the delicacy, the decencies, the engaging appearance by which she attracted the lover. Men are very selfish beings. They have very little of your disinterested feelings. You must not suffer, with them, your amiableness to fail. And how is esteem to be preserved, even when the fervour of affection declines? You cannot dream of perpetual admiration. The roses and carnations are for the summer months. What provision is there for winter! What woman is the most universally valued? THE DOMESTIC. And for your encouragement be assured, that the more religious men are in their feelings, and the more improved in their understandings, the more certainly will they be attached to domestic life; always having an abundance of entertainments in private and tranquil scenes, unknown to the vulgar and the dissipated.

—An attention to his *official ministrations*. On these, I need not say, you will be sure to attend regularly, when it is in your power. But for this purpose you must value them. And here you are likely to feel some difficulties peculiar to your situation. A Sage has said, "Domestic greatness is unattainable." The Saviour testifies that "a Prophet is not without honour, save in his own country, and in his own house." And if this applied in a measure even to himself, it will bear in an unspeakably greater degree on all his imperfect servants. Distance diminishes and conceals defects; while nearness discovers and enlarges them. If familiarity does not breed contempt, it reduces veneration, and injures many kinds of impression. A husband must be a very consistent character, and be known to act always from principle, to enable a wife to feel under *his* services, as under those of a stranger, whose excellences only, she has heard of, while she is ignorant of the failings that would shade them—and such we allow a husband who is a minister *ought* to be: but even when he *is* such, though he will be essentially, he cannot be circumstantially the same always. He cannot be constantly in his robes. It would be affectation to attempt to keep up always the formal dignity of his pulpit exercises. Yea, it would be absurd even to distinguish himself in the ordinary actions and manners of life. He cannot be the preacher only: he must also appear the man, the companion, the father—

> "And he will not blush, that has a father's heart,
> To take in childish things a childish part."

But hence an effort will be necessary—to see, under all these common and familiar appendages of humanity—to recognize in one of like passions with yourself, and compassed about with infirmities, the man of God, the messenger of Heaven, the Herald of Salvation: to value the treasure as divine, though you *know* that it is contained in an earthen vessel; and to receive *his* word, "not as the word of man, but as it is in truth the word of God, that worketh effectually in them that believe."

—An attention to his *usefulness*. I do not mean that you should aid him in making his sermons: he ought to be able to make these himself; (neither should he steal his words from his neighbour) but you may be a helpmate to him, as to his personal religion; and need we say how much of the facility, and excellence, and success of his work, as a minister, will depend upon the spirituality of his mind, and the devoutness of his heart? You may remind him of his engagements. You may excite him to diligence in his holy calling; especially in those parts of it that draw forth less notice and praise.

Wherever he is found, he ought to be useful; and diffusing the savour of the Redeemer's knowledge in every place. Be not, therefore, illiberal and selfish with regard to his company. He ought to be a lover of home, and not to be disposed to spend his evenings abroad; for they are seasons not only the most valuable to himself, but the most free and favoured to a female engaged in the affairs of a household: but sometimes he must be preaching abroad. As to his civil visits, I hope he will never accept of an invitation in which you are not included: but circum-

stances may render it proper for him to go, when you cannot accompany him; and in such cases you will not wish to restrain him. Above all, you will not complain of his absence, when you know that he is not idling away his time in lounging calls and gossiping talk, but is sedulously engaged in his study. While he is endeavouring to do justice to his intended subjects, and resolved not to offer to the Lord that which costs him nothing—you will even aid his people and the public, by doing all in your power to secure him from the disturbance of thoughtless intruders.

A long-standing connexion does credit both to the pastor and the church: but ministers become, not unfrequently, uneasy, and as the expression is—moveable. It has been supposed by some, that there is an unusual number of these moveables in our day: and hence the late Andrew Fuller, by a rough, but striking metaphor, observed, in a letter published since his death, that many of our modern preachers seemed stung by the gad fly. I fear that this powerful stinger is sometimes a near relation. Not that I throw the blame always upon the wife—we know the composition of many ministers too well: but we also have seen enough occasionally on *her* side, to justify our admonishing you to beware of an unsettled and roving spirit; or of becoming too sensitive to the difficulties that may arise in your husband's residence.

In every situation there are trials. We are acquainted with those in our present circumstances, and they press us; but those of a new condition are unfelt, and even unknown: yet they may be equally, and even more numerous and painful. When a man changes often, there is danger of his getting, not only the character, but the habit of a changeling: and a rolling stone gains no moss: and a tree always transplanting cannot radicate so as to be firm, vigorous, and fruitful. We have known ministers who, yielding to mistaken views, or present impressions, have stepped out of their place; and left not only their comfort, but their usefulness behind them. Take heed, therefore, how you in any way contribute to this evil. You should hardly let your preference, if you have one, be known, even to your husband, while he is endeavouring sincerely to ascertain what the will of God is, concerning him.

His reputation, too, will affect his usefulness. And how much does this depend upon you! From your affection you will be eager to extol him, and perhaps be angry with those who do not join in your partial applause. But let me whisper a more excellent way. In the Protestant churches of Hungary, they degrade from his office the pastor, whose wife indulges herself in cards, dancing, or any public amusement, that bespeaks a lover of the world, rather than a Christian matron. This severity springs from the supposition, that he should not have chosen such a consort; or that she, having promised obedience, would not thus act without his approbation or permission. If no law of this kind is known among us, the spirit of it is commonly felt and expressed. Ministers are always in a measure blamed for the defects and faults of their wives: the very pity that is sometimes kindly expressed on their behalf, is constructively a sort of censure. He who acts imprudently and improperly in one case—especially if it be a matter of importance, will be judged of by it, in other things—perhaps in all. It is often said that ministers, though they have the best opportunities of selection, and are under the greatest obligations to make a wise choice, are commonly betrayed into alliances the most ineligible. The reflection is not a little invidious; and is by far too general. I have the happiness of knowing many most agreeable and very important exceptions. And I am fully persuaded that you, my respected friend, will be a striking addition to the number. You have it in your power to be so—you have it in your disposition. It is your aim—and it will be your attainment, to dignify your station, and reflect honour on the judgment, taste, and piety of your husband.

And be encouraged to go forward. You will not lose your reward. You may not make a splendid figure in history. You must not expect, though so closely related to him, to gain the same distinction and notice as a popular minister will obtain. While he is exalted by his office, you are left to move chiefly in scenes of comparative privacy. Your duties are regular, sober, unstriking; and furnish few materials for common panegyric. Yet even this very seeming disadvantage turns to your account. It serves to raise your worth; and to promote and display the purity of your motive. You can go on with patient continuance in well doing, without the excitement of publicity, or the claps of the multitude.

Nor will you be always undistinguished. Your day is coming. You will share in the revelation of Jesus Christ, when every one will have praise of God according to their concern to please him, and not according to the present distributions of fame. And even now you are proving what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God. Even now your duties are all important and indispensable. Even now, in the convictions of reason and wisdom, you are approved and ennobled. The heart of your husband safely trusts in you; so that he hath no need of spoil: you will do him good, and not evil, all the days of your life. Your children will rise up and call you blessed. Your domestics will thank God that even they came under

your kind and pious care. Your neighbours will commend you. The church and all your religious connexions will honour and love you. And God, even your own God, will bless you. He who has redeemed you by the death of his Son, and has called you by his grace: He to whom you have dedicated yourself, both in single and social life, saying, Lord, I am thine, save me—He keeps a book of remembrance: He forgets not your work of faith and labour of love: He accepts you and your services in the Beloved; and in his favour your horn shall be exalted.

—And this consolatory assurance, my esteemed friend, you will need. Your station has, indeed, its advantages, which it would be ungrateful to overlook. Your intellectual, moral, and spiritual privileges are above those of many. You have frequent access to edifying company. You have the entertainment and profit of books. You have the habitual presence of one whose lips keep knowledge. His education and acquisitions prepare him for instructive, and improving conversation. His function calls him to a regular life, exempt from the bustle and competitions of the world; and is every way friendly to virtue and sensibility. His employment and his studies tend to soften, and refine, and elevate his mind: while the extreme value of character to his profession, is a spur to excellency, and a pledge of good deportment. You have the honour of being connected, not only with a man of grace, but "a man of God;" not only with one who serves him, but serves at the altar; and fills an office, as a preacher of the gospel, which an angel might be induced to envy.

But the honour and the advantages have their counterbalancings. I hope you have counted the cost; and instead of complaining of the difficulties before you, are determined to be the more circumspect; and the more prayerful—constantly seeking fresh supplies of that grace which alone is sufficient for you in all your duties, and in all your trials.

And trials you must not expect to escape. From envy or ignorance you may often be misjudged and misrepresented: for persons who act upon principle, especially in peculiar situations, cannot be comprehended by those, "who walk as men;" and people are always more ready to be censorious than to be candid, in what they do not understand. Nothing is more uncertain than the applause of the religious multitude. Your husband, now caressed, may be neglected. His place, now crowded, may be thinned of its attendants by one far his inferior—unless in novelty, and lungs. Some Diotrephes may love to have the pre-eminence, and prate against him with malicious words. A perverse spirit may be mingled in the midst of a peaceful people. The Antinomian leaven may corrupt the purity, and mar the prosperity of the church—And at the discovery of his perplexity and distress, a sword also may pierce through your own soul.

The calling of your husband exposes him to temptations; and he may be injured by them. He may yield to vain imaginations, and high thoughts, that exalt themselves; and give up the simplicity there is in Christ Jesus. If he does not embrace dangerous errors, he may be enticed into some peculiarities, and injure his influence by some religious freaks and vagaries. He may be found among the prophets. Instead of preaching repentance towards God, and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ; and having a word in season for him that is weary: he may employ himself in breaking open the seals, and blowing the trumpets, and pouring out the vials of the Apocalypse. The spiritual man may be mad. Popular applause (for as the fining-pot for silver, and the furnace for gold, so is a man to his praise) may elevate him into pride and arrogance. Entertained and idolized as a very agreeable and clever companion, he may grow weary of the tameness of ordinary life; and disrelish home; and leave you to serve alone in the cares of a rising family—I dare not suppose any thing further—yet what changes have we witnessed in a course of years! Lord, what is man!

—But it cannot be concealed that he is frail and mortal. You may have to pray, "Lord, behold he whom Thou lovest is sick." You may be called to the trying alternative of leaving a helpless babe, to accompany the father who journeys for health. You may have to watch at the side of the couch of infirmity, and of the bed of languishing. You may have to faint at the stillness of a dying hour; and only revive to learn that—the guide of your youth—the arm of your support—the comforter that should relieve your soul, is gone—and the place that once knew him, will know him no more for ever—his usual seat—his favourite walk—the sacred desk where yet his image seems to dwell—

You may not only be left a widow. You may be surrounded with bereaved children; and have to struggle with hardships—perhaps penury—perhaps neglect. Perhaps you may be destined, like many who have gone before you, to learn by experience the little posthumous generosity and kindness there is, towards the remnants of those who have worn out life in the service of the religious public. "Is this Naomi!"—"Call me not Naomi—call me Marah—for the Almighty hath dealt very bitterly with me—I went out full—"

—Yet some true friendship will be found. Some will show kindness to his house for Jonathan's sake. There are the gray-headed, who are saying, "I have been young and now am old, yet I have never seen the righteous forsaken, or his seed begging bread."—

Even in the cloudy and dark day, when the eye pours out tears unto God, he will be your refuge and strength; a very present help in trouble. Your departed friend, when dying, heard him say, though you could not: "Leave thy fatherless children, I will preserve them alive; and let thy widow trust in me." And He is faithful who promised. Lean upon his word—and you shall find him to be a "Father of the fatherless—and a judge of the widows in his holy habitation."

—And if, while feeling the attraction of your now glorified partner, who is waiting to receive you to himself, you should yet linger long in this vale of tears, He who has delivered will deliver. He will guide you with his counsel; and when you approach the end of your journey, He will hear your prayer of faith—"Cast me not off in the time of old age, forsake me not when my strength faileth—Thou, who hast shown me great and sore troubles, shalt quicken me again; and bring me up again from the dust of the earth. Thou shalt increase my greatness, and comfort me on every side." "AND THE DAYS OF THY MOURNING SHALL BE ENDED."

THE WIFE'S ADVOCATE:

A SERMON,

PREACHED ON A MARRIAGE OCCASION.

BY WILLIAM JAY.

"Husbands, love your Wives, and be not bitter against them."
"Husbands, love your Wives, even as Christ also loved the Church, and gave himself for it."—PAUL.
"*True* greatness is always tender and sympathising."—LAVATER.

PREFACE.

"DOING nothing by partiality"—said Paul to his son Timothy. If Ministers would observe this charge, they must bring forward the doctrine, the experience, and the practice of the Christian system, equally—or at least proportionately. Circumstances may indeed vary. The day in which we live, the zeal of false teachers, the ignorance or tendency of a congregation, may occasionally require a more full and frequent enforcement of one of these parts, than of the other two: but neither of them must be lost sight of in the ordinary course of our preaching—provided we wish to "speak unto the people all the words of this life"—and to preserve our hearers from legality, enthusiasm, and Antinomianism. For each of these evils greatly arises from the too *exclusive* treatment of each of these three divisions of theology—Antinomianism, growing out of *mere* doctrinal—enthusiasm, out of mere experimental—and legality, out of mere practical preaching.

When the Author, if he may be excused a reference to himself, quite a youth, first went to London, and was all anxiety to hear the preachers of the famed metropolis—he was told by a friend, if he wished to hear a good doctrinal sermon, he must hear ——; if an experimental, he must hear ——; and if a practical, he must hear ——. And he well remembers simply asking, "But is there no minister here who preaches all these? I should rather hear him."

This mode, he is conscious, he has always aimed and endeavoured to follow himself: and by this criterion he is willing to be judged—not indeed by an occasional hearer—but by his regular and constant attendants. The following discourse, therefore, is not to be taken as a *specimen* of his preaching, but as a *part;* the propriety and usefulness of which, are to be viewed in alliance with other parts, and in harmony with the whole.

—A minister, who, like Epaphras, would "stand perfect and complete in all the will of God," *must* inculcate the relative duties—

—And he will find his advantage in enforcing them connectedly. Each party will the better receive—especially admonition and reproof; when the corresponding party is addressed at the same time, and in the same manner: because it will show that the preacher has no private aim; and is no respecter of persons.

The Apostles invariably adopted this method. If they addressed servants, they always addressed masters. If they exhorted children, they always exhorted parents also. It was the same with regard to the conjugal relations.

The Author observed this example himself some years ago, when he preached and published a Sermon on "The Mutual Duties of Husbands and Wives." A discourse which he hopes has not been without its usefulness in not a few instances. And it was this thought that induced him to add this discourse to the foregoing Charge. He allows, *this* case is not perfectly similar to the *former;* for then, as the Charge regarded the *Wife* of a minister, the Sermon should have respected the minister himself. Yet the Sermon is not only addressed to Husbands, who have always many things in common with each other; but it is founded on words, which, originally, if not spoken exclusively, were spoken peculiarly to Levites—an order of men, not always, perhaps, the most perfect—here.

If the Sermon produced some clamour after the delivery; so it may in the perusal. But it is easy to conclude from what quarter the complaining will come—They never feel the reflection, who are perfectly innocent of the Charge.

Bath; December 1, 1829.

SERMON.

And this have ye done again, covering the altar of the Lord with tears, with weeping, and with crying out, insomuch that he regardeth not the offering any more, or receiveth it with good-will at your hand. Yet ye say, Wherefore? Because the Lord hath been witness between thee and the wife of thy youth, against whom thou hast dealt treacherously: yet is she thy companion, and the wife of thy covenant. And did not he make one? Yet had he the residue of the Spirit. And wherefore one? That he might seek a godly seed. Therefore take heed to your spirit, and let none deal treacherously against the wife of his youth.—Malachi ii. 13—15.

It has been the lot of some very good men, to live in very bad times. And this was the case with Malachi. Even *then*, indeed, some were found, "who feared the Lord, and thought upon his name." And they were graciously noticed and distinguished by him —"They shall be mine, saith the Lord of Hosts, in that day when I shall make up my jewels; and I will spare them as a man spareth his own son that serveth him."

These, however, were only so many exceptions from the multitude; and resembled a few small luminaries, that serve to render the darkness between the more palpable. According to the language of our Prophet, the degeneracy was complete. From the crown of the head to the sole of the foot, there was no soundness. The young and the old; the rich and the poor; rulers and subjects; priests and people—were all deeply revolted from God.

In such a corrupt state of society, the office of a minister is not a very enviable, or easy one. It is trying to censure and condemn; and he that is not faithful to his conscience and commission, will fail under the trial, and prophesy smooth things, because the multitude love to have it so. But the man of God, raised above the love of fame, and the dread of frowns, will not shun "to declare *all* the counsel of God," "warning *every* man, and teaching *every* man in all wisdom, that he may present every man *perfect* in Christ Jesus."

The connexions of life, the sources of so much virtue and sin, happiness and misery; are numerous and various: and when properly estimated, they are not to be judged of by their publicity, and elevation, and splendour; but by the constancy of their influence, the extent of their operation, and the importance of their effects. The most ordinary relations, therefore, are the most fundamental. These are the DOMESTIC. Communities originate from families; and depend upon them: and the quality of the one must partake largely of the attributes of the other. In religious concerns, it is not too much to say, with Philip Henry, that "a man is really what he is relatively." We are aware that there is much of instinct in the relative affections; and that they do not strike far into moral character. The existence of them alone, is not a sufficient proof of piety. But it is otherwise with the *absence* of them. This is decisive evidence *against* a person. If he is bad at home, he is bad every where. If he is a bad father, and a bad husband, he *cannot* be a good man. And, therefore, when a very eminent minister was asked whether he thought a certain individual was truly pious, he replied, "I cannot tell—I never lived with him."

Hence a preacher that would make full proof of his ministry, must enter the scenery of families, and inquire how matters stand between masters and servants; parents and children; wives and husbands.

And it is here, we find Malachi. He is dealing with the latter relationship; and he speaks boldly as he ought to speak—"And this have ye done again, covering the altar of the Lord with tears, with weeping, and with crying out, insomuch that he regardeth not the offering any more, or receiveth it with good-will at your hand. Yet ye say, Wherefore? Because the Lord hath been witness between thee and the wife of thy youth, against whom thou hast dealt treacherously: yet is she thy companion, and the wife of thy covenant. And did not he make one? Yet had the residue of the Spirit. And wherefore one? That he might seek a godly seed. Therefore take heed to your spirit, and let none deal treacherously against the wife of his youth."

Let us attend to four articles.

THE SUBJECT OF COMPLAINT.

THE AGGRAVATION OF THE OFFENCE.

THE CONDEMNATION OF THE TRANSGRESSOR.

THE MEANS OF PREVENTION.

First. THE SUBJECT OF COMPLAINT. The Charge is against unkind husbands; and consists in this—That they imbittered the lives of those they ought to have loved and cherished; so that they caused them, when they approached the sanctuary of God, instead of rejoicing before him, as his service

required, to break forth into the most passionate expressions of grief. "This have ye done, covering the altar of the Lord with tears, with weeping, and with crying out."

Who does not here call to mind the history of Hannah? "And as she went to the house of the Lord, so her adversary provoked her much, for to make her fret, because the Lord had shut up her womb—Therefore she wept and did not eat—and she was in bitterness of soul, and prayed unto the Lord, and wept sore." But you say, "This was not occasioned by Elkanah. He was an attached and an attentive husband." It is true, it was not occasioned by him *immediately;* but it was so *really.* Had Hannah been, as she ought to have been, his only wife, the distress would have been prevented; and she would not have found herself in alliance with a fellow-wife, that delighted to insult and aggravate her disappointment.

And you will observe, that this was one of the ways, in which the husbands, here complained of, converted the very devotion of their wives into mourning, and made the altar of God, not a place of gladness and praise, but of refuge and appeal. They added to their number; and thus vexed and degraded their wives, by reducing them from peace to a state of contention; from supremacy to jealousy and rivalship; from being the sole objects of attraction, to share divided, diminished, precarious regards.

Though polygamy had been long practised, it was never justified. The very tolerance of it, in every instance, showed most clearly and strongly, by the effects, that it was a deviation from rectitude. That which is irreconcilable to the welfare of domestic life, could never obtain the *approbation* of Him who ordained that state, not only for the purpose of purity, but of peace and happiness. The evils arising from the usage itself, therefore, had so far checked it, that in Judea, at the time of our Saviour, we meet with no instances of it. It was also forbidden among the Greeks and Romans. And this accounts, as Paley observes, for our finding no particular enactment against it in the New Testament; but it *is* said, "To avoid fornication, let every man have his *own wife*—not wives; and let every wife have her *own husband.*"

The pleasure of God also appears in proportioning the actual number of males and females. There is, indeed, some little inequality in the births of these; but the fact strengthens the reasoning. If there are born more males than females, by one in nineteen, the level is restored by the superior casualties to which the male sex is exposed; and the balance remaining, allows but one woman to one man. And what can show the will of God more decisively than his conduct! If we go back to the beginning of the world, no conceivable reason can be given, why, if polygamy was to be continued to the human race, it should not have commenced with it. But hear our Prophet—"And did not he make one?" One Eve for one Adam? Adam even in Paradise had one wife only—This oneness, therefore, could not have been deemed a confinement, but a regulation becoming the most perfect state—"Yet had he the residue of the Spirit"—and *could* therefore have made another partner as fair and lovely as Eve herself was—"And wherefore one? That he might see a godly seed"—And where is such a pious offspring likely to be found? Can children be brought up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord—in the presence of the lawlessness of one sex, and the debasement of the other? In the residence of oppression? Sensuality? Passion? Artifice? Hypocrisies? In the midst of divided and opposing interests? Dissensions? Swellings? Tumults? "Where envy and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work."

But another of the evils here reprobated, was the putting away their wives when they chose to dislike them. Unless in one case, conceded by reason and revelation, the marriage relation is indissoluble. Hence, says our Saviour, in answer to the question of the Pharisees, "Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for *every* cause? Have ye not read, that He who made them at the beginning made them male and female; and said, For this cause a man shall leave his father and mother, and cleave to his wife; and they twain shall be one flesh? What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder." Upon which they said unto him, "Why then did Moses command to give a writing of divorcement, and to put her away?" He said unto them, "Moses, because of the hardness of your hearts, suffered you to put away your wives: but from the beginning it was not so. And I say unto you, whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whosoever marrieth her which is put away, doth commit adultery."

This exception being made, "The Lord God of Israel saith, that he hateth putting away." Cases of hardship bearing peculiarly on individuals, will doubtless now and then occur; but such occasional evils are more than compensated by the advantages of the limitation. For we should consider what would be, not the personal and immediate, but the general and the ultimate tendency and effects of larger permission. Whatever other reasons for divorce were allowed, many would be sure to live up to them; and licentiousness would soon also require yet more allowance. This was seen in France. When, after the Revolution, husbands were permit-

ted to put away their wives for unsuitableness of temper, mutual dislike, perverseness, and other things; bad men availed themselves of every excuse to disengage themselves from restraint; and dissoluteness and misery spread among thousands, who would otherwise have been satisfied with their condition. For people soon acquiesce in what they know to be unalterable; and their destiny, by habit, is easily moulded into choice. They who are conscious that they cannot separate, will feel that it is their mutual interest to forbear, to give up, and to accommodate. To which we may add, that when a connexion is formed for life, much more prudence and care are likely to be exercised in forming it, than if it were terminable at pleasure.

We cannot be censured for these remarks. Not only has our subject brought them before us; but they are very worthy of our attention; and we cannot help observing, that the exclusion of polygamy and the prohibition of divorce—confining marriage to one pair, and rendering the union indissoluble—have done more to promote and secure the morals and welfare of the community, than all the institutions, the wisdom and goodness of legislators have ever established. Nor can we be sufficiently thankful, that in these important concerns, the laws of our country fall in with the authority of God.

But though, in this highly favoured land, neither of these modes of domestic persecution is open to a husband; there are many other ways in which he may "cover the altar of the Lord with tears, and with weeping, and crying out."

He cannot safely take to himself more wives than one—But to that one he may prove unfaithful; and basely transfer to another, the affection alone due to herself.

He cannot legally put away his wife—But by oppressive and cruel, degrading and insulting conduct, he may force her to withdraw; and then falsely plead and use the refusal to live with him, which he himself designedly produced.

I know not how to refer to bodily violence —"No *man* ever yet hateth his own flesh, but nourisheth and cherisheth it."—But is there a brute in human shape? Is there a wretch, miscalled a husband, who is not ashamed to execute what the preacher is ashamed even to intimate?

But every depth of disgrace, every exertion of cruelty, is not necessary to break a tender heart, or to crush a delicate spirit. He may accomplish his work by studied neglect; by churlish manners; by unkind language; by alienated or angry looks. A contemptuous sneer will strike a death-chill into every feeling. A bitter irony will sting like a scorpion, and leave the deadly rankling behind.

He may reduce her to the mortification of seeing him restless at home; always anxious to contrive or excuse absence, instead of dwelling with her according to knowledge; and fonder of any company than the society of his wife.

He may deprive her of her needful support and comfort. And though she would patiently and cheerfully share in the privations and distress brought on them by the providence of God, she cannot but feel grievously the trial of hardships and straits arising solely from idleness, or drunkenness, or gaming, or licentiousness.

He may wound her, by withholding from her the confidence required by the mutuality and unity of the relation—a relation that allows nothing to be concealed; nothing to be found out by search or accident. Yet it is not a very uncommon trial for a wife, unapprised, unprepared, to be plunged from genteel life into destitution and wo; while she has been censured for living in a style she would have been the first to have reduced, had she divined the event that rendered it a duty.

We cannot do justice to this part of our subject. The causes of complaint are numberless. But we must not avoid adding—That relative trials are often more painful than personal ones—That in the case before us, the anguish is enhanced by the nearness and importance of the quarter from which it comes—and That it is frequently increased by secrecy and suppression—the sufferer being denied the relief of pouring her sorrow even perhaps into the ear of friendship. The heart knows the bitterness. The groanings cannot be uttered. But let us pass from the complaint to

II. THE AGGRAVATION OF THE OFFENCE. It is taken from the character of the aggrieved.

First: "She is the wife of thy *youth*." The exemplification is derived from an early marriage: and the reference is a countenance of the usage. Men may marry when they please; but, in order to illustrate the force of this relation, the Scripture does not notice confederacies of profit; bargains of conveniency; provisions of nursery-hood for infirmity, and sickness, and death—the only connexion to which God in his word ever alludes, and from which he reasons, is "the wife of youth."

To such an object there will belong a peculiar affection. It is the first attachment; fresh, simple, and undebased. The feelings strike deeper, and root firmer, owing to earlier implantation and longer growth. The conformity between the parties is more full and perfect; as they assimilate into the qualities of each other more easily while soft and pliant, than after years and habitudes have confirmed them, and rendered all change impossible, or difficult and irksome.

About what other object, when taken away, will a man's memory linger so long and tenaciously, as—the image of the wife of his youth? Of *her* who first drew into one mighty and exquisite feeling all the sympathies of his heart? Of *her* with whom he passed the delicious season of virtuous courtship? Of *her* who inspired him with all the liveliness and enjoyment of hope? Of *her* who first made him sensible of the endearments of domestic bliss? Of *her* who first by the cry and the image of innocent helplessness told him the tenderness of the parental relation? Of *her* on whose knee his child first clasped his little hands to pray? Of *her* whose leaning so often pressed his arm, in his way to the house of God, in the walks of rural excursion, and the journey of life?

—And canst thou, O man, overlook all this while she is living? What if the charm that lighted up the blaze of attachment be now fading? The rose could not always bloom: but surely the fragrance remains. What if infirmities more suddenly or slowly begin to appear: now is the time for evincing and displaying a more grateful and unselfish affection. Is the worth of years to be forgotten? Has she not been always thy ministering spirit? Has not thy happiness been dearer to her than her own? In all thy afflictions, has she not been afflicted? Perhaps in giving life, or watching over the pain and malady of thy offspring, she has impaired her frame, and health is only now a living sacrifice. Go and make God thine example—"I remember Thee, the kindness of thy youth, the love of thine espousal, when thou wentest after me in the wilderness, in a land that was not sown."

Secondly, says the Prophet, "Is she not thy *companion?*" This, perhaps, is the most lovely and becoming idea of the relation that can be supplied. She is not, O man, thy superior: she is not thy slave—thy servant—thy dependent. She is indeed a help-mate; so art thou—but she is "thy companion."

Yet, as a companion, she is very distinguishable from every other. A brother or sister is a companion; but they are so involuntarily—she is thy companion by choice. Many are companions for a while; but they are separable from us, and our intercourse may be reduced to correspondence—She is thy companion for life. Let other companions be ever so intimate, they have yet their separate allotments—she is thy companion, so as to have no interests of her own, but is an equal sharer in all the cares and comforts of thine.

It will be confessed, that there are some differences between the male and the female character, produced by nature, and enlarged by education. But the very differences render them the more mutually eligible as companions. The defective qualities of each are provided for in the attributes of the other. Both excel; but they excel in their own way. *He* is more characterized by thought; *she*, by sympathy: but these properties demand and aid each other. The eagerness, the sensitiveness, the delicacy, the genius, of the female, would unnerve the man: and the courage, the inflexibility, the severeness of the man, would unsex the female. Nothing can be more absurd than to oppose their respective claims; nothing more injurious than to separate them. Let their peculiar properties and places be retained—and all will be found adaptation and order. Let them be associated—and all will be found harmony and completeness.

But how is it to be lamented when their companionship is not carried into the widest, noblest, and most important region of its exercise—I mean religion? How unmeet is it, while one goes into the presence of God by devotion, for the other to stand without, till this transaction be over! How forceless the petition singly signed, while the voice of love and union cries, "If two of you shall agree on earth, as touching any thing they may ask, it shall be done of my Heavenly Father!" How strange and unsightly must it be for one of these associates to be walking the way everlasting, while the other is going the road to death! How hurtful and fatal to divide and separate, where, weak and opposed alone, they need every mutual encouragement and assistance! How appalling to reflect, that the most endearing alliance must be broken up for ever at the termination of a life equally short and uncertain!

Husbands and wives! never forget that you are moral and accountable beings; and that the present life is only the threshold of existence. Be companions in faith and godliness. Walk together as heirs of the grace of life. Take sweet counsel together, and go to the house of God in company. Allure each other over the land of revelation in the length and breadth thereof. Mutually survey its prospects, admire its beauties, and gather of its flowers and fruits. Encourage one another with these words; and let your hearts be comforted and knit together in love unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding to the acknowledgment of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ, in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge—Then your children will not be perplexed by contrary counsels and examples. Then you will be lovely in life, and in death not divided. Then your separation will be only temporary; a time of re-union will come; and the intercourse of pure and perfected friendship will be renewed for ever.

Thirdly: "She is the wife of thy *covenant.*" Covenant here means the marriage contract; and by the mention of this, the husband is

called upon to remember that the vows of God are upon him. A truly virtuous man will feel love more binding than law; yet considering human frailty, and the interests of society, it is well to be bound by duty as well as affection: and be constrained, if we act wrong, not only to violate principle, but obligation. The forms and rites of the connubial engagement may vary in different ages and countries; but some sanction has been always required. If the contract be not directly a religious transaction, it has generally been accompanied and enforced by religious sanctions. And surely such a connexion can never be rendered too solemn and too sacred. It is the most awful and interesting compact into which it is possible to enter. Yet there are men who can trifle with a stipulation so momentous; and seem to forget all the responsibilities it entails: requiring perhaps at the same time exact fidelity on the other side—as if, in a covenant, both the parties were not equally bound. Did these men, beforehand, tell the persons they are endeavouring to espouse, how they designed to treat them; or did they refuse to pledge themselves to any kind of agreeable and good behaviour towards them; they would act an open part at least; and their wives, though chargeable with folly in venturing to advance, would yet have no deceitfulness to complain of. But when a man has voluntarily promised and bound himself by oath, he is no longer at liberty to behave otherwise than his engagement prescribes, without falsehood, perfidy, perjury, and disgrace

He that does not verify the engagement, not only implied but expressed, upon which alone the heart was surrendered to him, is no better than a seducer. He falsely wins confidence, basely to betray it; and proclaims himself not only to be destitute of the principles of a Christian, but the honour of a man: and for want of common honesty, he ought to be shunned by all reputable society. Herod, though he was grieved at his promise, yet would not refuse to ratify it, for his oath's sake. Jephthah, though he had to sacrifice his own daughter, yet, said he, "I have opened my mouth unto the Lord, and I cannot go back." A good man sweareth to his own hurt, and changeth not." And we know who has said, "When thou vowest a vow unto God, defer not to pay it; for he hath no pleasure in fools. Pay that which thou hast vowed. Better is it that thou shouldest not vow, than that thou shouldest vow and not pay. Suffer not thy mouth to cause thy flesh to sin; neither say thou before the angel, that it was an error: wherefore should God be angry at thy voice, and destroy the work of thy hands?" Therefore let us consider

III. The condemnation of the transgressor. Here we have both the sentence —and the evidence upon which it is adjudged.

The first is thus expressed—"Insomuch that he regardeth not the offering any more, or receiveth it with good will at your hand." And is this a light thing? God is the supreme good. In His favour is life. It is the most delightful consciousness in the world to know that we are accepted of him; and to have the testimony that we please God. But all here is aversion, rejection, contempt. "I will have no communion with you. I hate not only your sins—but your services."

It would seem surprising, indeed, that those who live in disobedience to his commands, should yet be found attending the worship of God at all: for there is much in the Dutch proverb, "Praying will make a man leave off sinning, or sinning will make a man leave off praying." But the heart is deceitful above all things, as well as desperately wicked: and the inconsistiencies it is continually putting forth, are as wonderful as in things in the course of nature or order of providence. There are those who will observe the form of godliness, and deny the power of it. There are those who will support the cause of Christ and defraud their tradesmen: who will regard the positive ordinances of religion; and neglect its moral requisitions: who will value the ritual part of devotion, and violate the practical. How many are godly on the Sabbath, and worldly all the week! Who appear saints in the house of God, and are demons in their own! Are there not some who even maintain morning and evening service in their families, and yet cover the altar of the Lord with tears, and with weeping, and crying out?

But let such know that omission is preferable to perversion. And let them "go and learn what that meaneth, I will have mercy and not sacrifice"—"God heareth not sinners; but if any man be a worshipper of God, and doeth his will, him he heareth"—He that stoppeth his ears at the cry of the poor, he also shall cry himself, and shall not be heard. Hence the God of Israel saith, "He that killeth an ox, is as if he slew a man: he that sacrificeth a lamb, as if he cut off a dog's neck: he that offereth an oblation, as if he offered swine's blood: he that burneth incense, as if he blessed an idol." Wherefore? Were not these observances of His own appointment? They were. But He loathed them when they became substitutes for moral principle, or connected with practices which he had condemned. Therefore, says he, "Wash ye, make you clean, put away the evil of your doings, from before mine eyes—Seek justice; relieve the oppressed; judge the fatherless; plead for the widows—Come now and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool."

Is this a light thing?—More is implied

than is expressed. There is no medium between non-acceptance with God, and condemnation. If we are not in his favour, we are under his wrath. And who can stand before *Him* when once *He* is angry? The grand question is, In what relation are we found to *Him?* Is *He* our friend or our foe? If our foe, he can arm all creatures against us: he can operate immediately upon our mind: he can pursue us beyond the grave, which screens us from all other enemies; and, after he hath killed, can cast into Hell. He that judgeth us is the Lord—And if he be for us, who can be against us? He can make all things work together for our good. They whom he blesses are blessed: and they whom he curses are cursed: and none can reverse it.

And is this a light thing? Wisdom cries, Hide not thy face from me: put not thy servant away in anger. There be many that say, Who will show us any good! Lord, lift Thou up the light of thy countenance upon me. And, to heal this broken heart; to soothe every sorrow; to sweeten every comfort; to raise me above the fear of every evil; say unto my soul, I am thy salvation.

But, secondly, who are these? In order to punish legally, there must be not only guilt, but conviction; and there is no conviction without evidence, without witness. Who is the witness here? God himself—"The Lord hath been witness between thee and the wife of thy youth, against whom thou hast dealt treacherously, though she is thy companion and the wife of thy covenant." This indeed is a case in which human witness is not, and cannot be always attainable. A few transgressors may be careless of observation, and, in their shame, seek no disguise: but in general, the offender courts secrecy. He knows his reputation is at stake; and that nothing lowers a man more in common estimation than improper temper and conduct towards the most claimful of all relations. He therefore tries as much as possible to cloak it. Before others he is often full of pretensions. He uses, perhaps, the most endearing expressions; and while the sufferer is conscious of the falseness of all this display, he passes for a respectable, perhaps a fond husband. But not with Him whose eyes are in every place, beholding the evil and the good. *He* sets his secret sins in the light of his countenance.

It would be well for us always to remember that God sees us; and the less we are under the cognizance of others, the more, in a way of motive and influence, we need to realize the inspection of our witness in heaven and our record on high. In the world and in the church we are more upon our guard, because there are many to observe us; but in our dwellings we give ourselves more latitudes. But God is there; and therefore we should walk within our house with a perfect heart, and set no wicked thing before our eyes, and hate the work of them that turn aside. He knoweth our down-sitting, and our up-rising. He compasseth about our path; and is acquainted with all our ways. He is a witness between us and our servants; a witness between us and our children; a witness between us and our wives—a constant witness—an unerring witness—a witness who is at the same time the lawgiver whose orders we contemn; and the judge who will bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good or whether it be evil.

What mysteries of iniquity will that day make manifest! How many tyrants have despatched their victims in dungeons, or by assassins whose employers were never known! How many seducers have entangled and ruined the innocent and unwary, the discovery of whom was suppressed by power or bribery! How many husbands have destroyed the peace, the comfort, the health, the life of those who ought to have been dear to them as their own souls, uncensured, and even unsuspected! But the Lord comes, who will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and make manifest the counsels of the heart.

Yet in wrath he remembers mercy: and before he destroys, he warns and admonishes. Hence,

IV. The means of prevention—"Therefore *take heed to your spirit*, and let *none* deal treacherously against the wife of his youth."

Here we are led immediately to the source of all evil. "Take heed to your *spirit*." There all begins: and there is no sanctifying the life without an attention to the heart. Therefore says Solomon, "Keep thy heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life." Heal the spring, and the streams will be wholesome. Make the tree good, and the fruit will be good. Renew the heart, and upon the tongue is the law of kindness. Replenish the heart, and out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. "A good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth good things; and an evil man out of the evil treasure, bringeth forth evil things."

But the meaning is, not only that we should attend to our principles if we would regulate our practice, but that we should never overlook or neglect the very first risings of evil. Evil is spreading like leaven, and a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump. It may be too late to assail the enemy when he has advanced and gathered force from success. Attack him at the outset, while yet his strength is small; and no strong-hold is taken; and no pass is even seized. When lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin; and

sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death. Crush, therefore, the cocatrice in the egg, lest it break forth, and become a fiery flying serpent.

Again. *All* are concerned in this caution —and "let *none* deal treacherously against the wife of his youth."

Are Levites excepted? They are chiefly the persons here complained of. Their lips are indeed to keep knowledge; but they are to *do*, as well as to *teach*. They are to be examples, to illustrate and recommend their own doctrine. The snuffers in the tabernacle were to be made of pure gold. They who reprove others are to be blameless themselves. Their exhortations, dishonoured by their own temper and practice, will not only be unavailing, but repulsive; and all the convictions *they* would fix in the conscience, will drop like arrows from an impenetrable shield. "Behold, thou knowest his will, and approvest the things that are more excellent, being instructed out of the law; and art confident that thou thyself art a guide of the blind, a light of them which are in darkness, an instructer of the foolish, a teacher of babes, which hast the form of knowledge and of the truth in the law. Thou, therefore, which teachest another, teachest thou not thyself? Thou that preachest a man should not steal, dost thou steal? Thou that sayest a man should not commit adultery, dost thou commit adultery? Thou that abhorrest idols, dost thou commit sacrilege? Thou that makest thy boast of the law, through breaking the law dishonourest thou God?" Who revolts not at receiving his food from a leprous hand? If the bad husband disgraces the good preacher, men will abhor the offering of the Lord.

Are the upper ranks above this injunction? It might be supposed that they had this imagination, from their conduct in too many instances. But the higher the individual, the more is he bound to regard it. He is by his station the more observable and influential; and the more injurious will his life prove, if it be vicious. Evil is a stream; and, like every other stream, it does not ascend, but runs downward. Or, to borrow another image, a private person is like a pocket watch, that only misinforms the wearer: a public character is like a town clock, that leads astray the whole parish.

Yet *no* man is entirely unobserved and uninfluential, especially when placed at the head of a family. Therefore let the low as well as the high remember the advice. Indeed the less of outward prosperity persons have, the more necessary is it to guard against those tempers and practices that will imbitter their trials; and to seek solace, under their privations, in the grace of the Gospel, the consolations of religion, and the comforts of domestic peace and love. And execrated be the sentiment that love and poverty are incompatible. There may be more of contentment, though less of mirth; more of the reality, though less of the show of happiness, in the cottage than in the mansion. Where the Lord is sought, he blesses their bread and their water. When in the simplicity of faith the Scriptures are read with prayer, and praise, these are found to be better than thousands of gold and silver.

Is this idle talk? Here is the language of inspiration—"Better is a dinner of herbs where love is, than a stalled ox and hatred therewith. Better is a little with quietness, than a house full of sacrifices with strife." "A little that a righteous man hath, is better than the riches of many wicked." What heart-cold wretchedness is often found connected with splendour, abundance, and excess—"The blessing of the Lord it maketh rich, and he addeth no sorrow with it."

Let the advancing in life guard against the loss of their first regards. The effervescence of the passion may subside, but let the spirit of the principle be preserved; and, like generous wines, it will refine and improve by keeping.

And let not the young be careless. The newly-married pair, happy in the possession of crowned desires, may think themselves in no danger of abated regard: but we have seen goodness, even in wedded life, like the morning cloud and early dew that passeth away. Therefore take help to *your* spirit. Watch, not only against the grosser evils, but minor delinquencies. Guard against the first symptom of declension. One thing prepares for, brings in, justifies another; and, when going astray, the smallness of each movement may keep us unalarmed, till we look back, and are shocked at the distance we have reached. Let your wife have no reason for the most *distant* apprehension. Let no sigh flit across her mind. Be not satisfied to keep within the bare precincts of duty; but care for the things of the wife, how you may please the wife. Be open. Be candid. Be tender. Be attentive. Be exemplary. In the connexion before us, inattention leads to indifference; and indifference to dislike; and dislike to disgust. If love be withdrawn, wedded life is confinement, misery, hell. Let love abound, and no ennui is known; no restraint is felt; no task is performed. The yoke is easy; the burden is light. Duty is privilege; and to oblige is more delightful than to be obliged. But remember, religion is the *best* promoter and preserver of this love; and therefore let *domestic morality* be founded in *Christian piety*.

"But why have you chosen such a passage as this?" Go and ask Malachi, why he inserted it in his short series of prophesyings? Go and ask Paul, whether "all Scripture is not given by inspiration of God, and profit-

able for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, and for instruction in righteousness?"—Does not the unspeakable importance of the subject justify the selection? Does not the character of the day in which we live, render such a discourse needful?

But I have availed myself of a particular event to bring forward these thoughts this morning. It is the union of —— with ——.

He will have too much good sense to take improperly the drift of the subject; or to suppose that caution and admonition necessarily imply censure or suspicion. No, my young friend; I am fully persuaded better things of you, though I thus speak; and believe that you will regard HER, whose heart has safely trusted in you as your companion, the wife of your youth and of your covenant; and continue to love and to cherish till the parting hour. I hail you on the completion of your wishes—"He that findeth a wife, findeth a good thing, and obtains favour of the Lord." I would not interrupt the joy of your espousals—But surely it cannot be unreasonable to say to the favoured sons of men, "Rejoice with trembling." The connexion you have formed is frail. It has its duties as well as its delights. It has also its cares as well as its comforts. Look not for a state of unalloyed happiness. Expect not to find the perfection in another, which you know another will never find in you. I commend you to God and to the word of his grace: and may He whom you have honoured in believing his truth, that "it is not good for man to be alone," look down from heaven, and say, "From this day will I bless you."

But I turn to you, my *female* friends—and, as far as I know my own convictions and feelings, I *am* your friend—you will therefore allow me to address you freely, especially since I have delivered myself unsparingly to those of my own sex.

First, let me address those who are yet unconnected. It is not improper for you to think of a condition which Nature has ordained us for; and which the Scripture pronounces honourable in all. Nor should you revolt from the state because there are husbands who "cover the altar of God with tears." All men are not liars. Nor should difficulties discourage you. These are found in every condition: and we are persuaded the state, if properly entered, is the most happy in this vale of tears. How much of the relish of our comforts is lost in unsocial enjoyment! How much do we need a friend, another self, to alleviate by sharing the cares and griefs of life! How many moments of languor, oppressiveness, and despondency are there, in which the heart beats for attention, sympathy, and kindness! How helpless is a solitary female! how many real dangers surround her; and how are these perils multiplied by solitariness! A single man has a thousand engagements abroad: a woman, if single, has little diversion from thought, and broods over real and imaginary evils. And how inferior is she reckoned to the female who sustains the character of a wife, and a parent, and is performing her duty to the world, and is the source of usefulness to the community!

But there is nothing *reproachful* in your present condition—unless you choose to make it so by exemplifying in your temper and conduct the imputations thrown on your state, especially in its advancement. Show that it does not necessarily entail malevolence; envy; scandal; curiosity; spleen; insipid formality; prudery; secrecy; a mystifying of trifles. The character and lives of too many of *our* sex are such as must prevent any reflection upon you for declining *them:* and your scorning to espouse worthlessness for the sake of any advantage; and your refusing every connexion unapproved by your principles and conscience, as well as affection; will raise you in the estimation of all the wise and good.

Never, therefore, settle it in your minds that you *must* enter this state; or that marriage is *essential* to your usefulness, respectability, and happiness. Refer it to HIM who has a right to dispose of us as he pleases; and who knows what is best for us. And in the mean time improve the *advantages* of your present state. You are free from a thousand anxiousnesses and trials, unfriendly to mental culture and enlarged devotion. "She that is unmarried careth for the things of the Lord, how she may be holy both in body and spirit. But she that is married, careth for the things of the world, how she may please her husband." If you have met with disappointment, let these reflections prevent dissatisfaction; and sober your hopes; and make you, when you think of altering your circumstances, to be the more prudent, circumspect, and prayerful. Look after good sense, good temper, domestic habits, and, above all, the fear of God. And as, after all your caution and care, it is possible for you to be imposed upon, commit your way unto the Lord, and let integrity and uprightness preserve you while you wait upon him.

Secondly, some of you are found among the bereaved. The guide of your youth, and the companion of your days, is removed from you; and your heart within you is often desolate. I am not wishing to open your wounds afresh—You are no longer seen leaning on your beloved—But there is another Being who now stands in the most interesting of all relations to you. He is the "Husband of the widow." Be not hasty to leave a condition into which his hand has led you; but as a widow indeed, continue trusting in God with all your heart; and hold communion with the hour when you shall re-unite with those who

are gone before, and are now waiting to receive you into everlasting habitations.

Thirdly, some of you are in a state that admits of our congratulations. You are affianced to those who are sensible of your value; whose inclinations fall in with their duty; who render love for love, confidence for confidence, attention for attention—

But I feel for *others*. The flattery which once perhaps your ear was too eager to drink in, has ended in disappointment and sorrow; and your eye poureth out tears unto God. Perhaps you were too sanguine in your expectations. Perhaps you looked for more in the relation than reason and Scripture have ever promised to afford. Perhaps now, upon the whole, you have but little reason to complain. Every state has its deductions.

But admitting it to be otherwise, allow me to ask—Has there been no blame-worthiness attached to yourselves? Have you done every thing in your power to render yourselves and your religion approved? You know the preacher does not join in the vulgar and unjust reflections cast upon your sex—but there are temper flaws unsightly, and there are tongue flaws intolerable. "Better to dwell in a corner of the house-top, than with a brawling woman in a wide house. A continual dropping in a rainy day and a contentious woman are alike. Are you slatterns? Do you love disorder? Are you idle, tattlers, busy-bodies, wandering from house to house? Are you keepers at home? Do you render your dwelling attractive? Do you make it the asylum of your husband from the toils and troubles of life? Does he find it the scene of accommodation, and peace, and cheerfulness? When abroad, is he "stung with the thoughts of home;" and is the most delightful part of his absence the moment that turns his face towards the loved place of his rest?

We know that you *can*—we have too often witnessed it not to know—we know that you *can*, present religion in every interesting and engaging form; that you *can*, not only render domestic life graceful, but piously attractive; that you *can* fan into a flame an expiring devotion; that you *can* give excellence and energy to every good word and work; that you *can* teach and enforce with a persuasive ease, and a tender mildness, whose influence is rarely without some success—Have you employed *these* efficiencies in connexion with every other? For let me tell you, my sisters, if you have not availed yourselves of your *religious means*, and used them *with prayer*, *perseveringly*, and *wisely*, and *invitingly*, you have as yet no absolute cause to complain, if your relative condition be not such as you would have it.

After all, with the exception of human infirmity, we will suppose a possible case. You have nothing to reproach yourself with; and yet your "house is not so with God." Even here we have a few words of advice to offer Be not forward to complain openly, not only because noisy grief is seldom deemed very worthy of sympathy; but also because, in your peculiar case, it is more likely to add to the evil than to remove it. Exposure not only mortifies, but commonly exasperates, and hardens; and the man, not only feeling the loss of self-respect, but the esteem of others, becomes reckless in his conduct. Beware of retaliation and reproach. Render not railing for railing, but contrariwise, blessing. Ever follow the example of the Lord Jesus, "who, when he suffered, threatened not, but committed himself to Him that judgeth righteously." Especially avoid every thing that is irritating when the mind of your husband is in a feverish and inflamed state; and when a season of speaking returns, remember, a soft answer turneth away wrath, while grievous words stir up anger. Yielding pacifieth great offences. And let me not offend while I hint, that it is not authority but influence that belongs to your condition; and that your influence is not derived from violence and insistings, but from prepossessings, amiableness, a willingness to waive even a right, and a desire to please rather than to conquer—And says not the Apostle the same? "Likewise, ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands: that, if any obey not the word, they also may without the word be won by the conversation of the wives; while they behold your chaste conversation coupled with fear: whose adorning, let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel; but let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price. For after this manner in the old time the holy women also, who trusted in God, adorned themselves, being in subjection unto their own husbands; even as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord: whose daughters ye are as long as ye do well, and are not afraid with any amazement."

Some men, it must be acknowledged, seem strangers to all refinement of feeling; and cannot be overcome by even the meekness of wisdom. Yet if the address of tenderness and entreaty be unhappily useless, all carriage of an opposite character will be *more* than useless. The being upon whom gentleness and good nature are lost, can never be amended by ill-humour and clamour. A man of sense will often, for the sake of propriety or peace, submit to be talked down by a wife talented in this species of oratory; but a man destitute of sense, will be sure to retort such treatment with double violence and insult. "With the well-advised is wisdom:" while fools are the most unpersuadable of all

animals—But you should not marry fools. You may be imposed upon with regard to piety—but you cannot be mistaken with regard to sense.

But if, after all your blamelessness and commendableness, you are in the affliction we have been endeavouring to prevent—one source of relief is open—Carry your distress to the mercy-seat; and spreading it before the God of all comfort, say—"Lord, all my desire is before Thee, and my groaning is not hid from Thee." While He permits your sufferings, He loves you. He pities you. He is on your side. He is able to turn the curse into a blessing—"We know that all things work together for good to them that love God." We have seen wives who have been chosen in the furnace of affliction. They have had this valley of Achor given them for a door of hope. Their purposes being broken off, even the thoughts of their heart; and their prospects on life's fairest side being clouded and gloomy; they have looked out after "a better country." They have asked, "Where is God my Maker, that giveth songs in the night?" They have said, "And now, Lord, what wait I for? My hope is in Thee."

THE END.

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